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NEW STATESMAN

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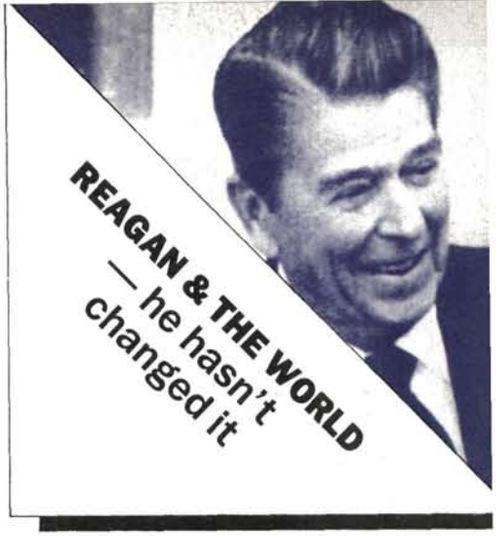

REAGAN & THE WORLD — he hasn't changed it

FACE THE PEOPLE

'We are running this campaign for the information of the people, not the convenience of the press'
Neil Kinnock 28 May 1987

Cover photograph: John Sturrock/Network

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Granada TV presents the case for a New North

What are the three main parties proposing to do about the North? Can they solve its problems? And can they help us all to create a New North? Granada TV is endeavouring to find out.

We're hosting a special one-day conference called *The Case for a New North* in Manchester on Sunday June 7th, just four days before polling day. Leading decision-makers in the region from the worlds of industry, commerce, health and education, will be meeting senior spokesmen from the main political parties to present their informed views on the North, and to question the politicians directly about their parties' policies for regenerating the North West.

This unique conference will be broadcast live at 2.30-3.30pm; 4.20-4.30pm; and 5-6pm in the Granada area.

The Case for a New North is just one part of Granada TV's comprehensive general election coverage. *The Granada 500* puts top politicians in front of a cross-section of voters every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. *The State of the Region* examines the North-South divide on Tuesday June 9 at 10.45pm. And *Granada Reports,* the Royal Television Society's Daily News Magazine of the Year, polls each of the North West's key marginals day by day throughout the campaign.

Watching the election on Granada TV, you can see for yourself who really cares about the North West.

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NEW STATESMAN

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CONTENTS

FEATURES

Phillip Whitehead: Campaign Diary 4
Election News: 5
Peter Kellner: Labour's mould cracked 9
News: 10
Patrick Forbes: The battle between Labour and the media for control of 'The Agenda' 14
David Goodhart: What Labour could make of the City 18
Tine van Houts: British elections won't go Dutch 20
Chris Smith: Presenting gay politics 21
Mary Kaldor: Tories' defence against arms race realities 21
Reader survey: We want your views . . . and you can win a case of wine 23-26
R. W. Johnson: Reagan's debt to the weapons makers 27
Peter Hennessy: Labour's plans for Whitehall 28

ARTS

John Spurling: Art 29
Judith Williamson: Cinema 30
Hugo Williams: Television 30
Andrew Clements: Opera 31
Simon Reynolds: Pop 32
Naseem Khan: Work in progress on election promises 33

BOOKS

Jeffrey Weeks: Fascism and desire 34
Ruth Rendell: Paperbacks 35
G. Parker: Poem 35
Amanda Hopkinson: Women and Aids 36
Nigel Fountain: Stephen Ward 36
Peter Shore: James Callaghan 37
Jenny Turner: June Jordan's political assays 38

BACKCHAT

Diana Eden: Infra dig 44
Colin Spencer: Food 44
Salamanca 45
Weekend competition 46
John Minnion: Take Me to Your Leader 47
Chess: George Botterill 47
This England 47

PLUS

Roger Woddis 4
Christian Clark: Vatican 27
Letters 39

NEXT WEEK

DON'T VOTE TILL YOU'VE READ THIS!

'Don't vote before you read the *New Statesman*': the next issue will contain a special essay from Professor Ralf Dahrendorf on the victims of our society: and John Rentoul contributes a companion piece on the new rich and the new poor

Sane but unbalanced

'UNBALANCED' has three main meanings. The Random House Dictionary of the English Language defines these as '1. Not balanced or not properly balanced. 2. Lacking steadiness or soundness of judgment. 3. Mentally disordered. Deranged'.

When Mr Tony Blair, Labour's Treasury spokesman, used the word of Mrs Thatcher at the opening of a week which saw both opposition parties target her style, he was seized upon gratefully by Mr Norman Tebbit as invoking the third of these definitions. But — as his coupling of the epithet with the further descriptive of 'unchecked' shows — he meant the first. And in that he was right. The Prime Minister is not balanced.

She is not balanced by colleagues. Mr John Biffen, an enthusiastic monetarist who is now stabbed by guilt over the plight of his government's victims, will certainly find no place in either Cabinet or shadow cabinet formed by Mrs Thatcher after the election. That leaves Mr Peter Walker, shunted into the second rank at Energy, as the sole dissenter (if *he* survives) doomed to wander round Bow Group meetings for eternity, giving coded speeches whose implications are denied when decoded. The intellectual cut and thrust which the Prime Minister is represented as enjoying has been successfully replaced by a monolith.

This is a terrible danger. For a third term for such a Cabinet would see it face a world in which Britain's badly damaged industrial base would have to take up the slack increasingly left by the decline of oil, and in which an already polarised society would be subjected to strains from which it has so far been partially protected. The collective instincts of a third term Thatcher Cabinet would be to pull the wagons in a circle and blame dissent on reds, troublemakers and shirkers.

She is not balanced by any sympathy for, even recognition of, collective values. Having elevated individual self-advancement into both an ideology and a governing style, Mrs Thatcher acknowledges collective provision — as in the health service — only when electoral values dictate a softer tone and caution on the assertion that the market will best provide for all. Her 'slip' over education at the beginning of the election campaign demonstrated a politician whose absolute belief is that *any* attempts to moderate inequalities, disadvantages and misfortune by collective provision are entirely wrong.

She has a point. For those with market power, collectivism is a hindrance. They can purchase services — including education and health — which are more skilfully tailored to their needs and which can improve their and their children's chances of survival in life and in the labour market. For the better off, freedom *is* defined by individual opportunity.

But for the poor, and the vast majority of those who are getting by, collectivism is a necessary fact of life. For them, decent education through which they can hope to find satisfaction of their ambitions for their children will only be provided in centrally funded schools. A decent standard of health service can only be provided in centrally funded hospitals and practices.

Further, and perhaps as importantly, the collective sustenance of community and kinship is a necessary part of a civilised life. This cannot and should not be legislated for by governments — but it can be and has been hugely damaged by policies which widen the circles of misery and poverty. The loss of work, and of a sense of purpose, in town after town, in whole sections of cities — read Robert Chesshyre's account of life in Skelmersdale in last Sunday's *Observer* — has meant, it seems, an embittered turning in upon oneself of families and individuals unable to cope with life.

Not all of this can be blamed on eight years of Conservative governments, but little of it has been relieved by them. Neither the Prime Minister, nor any of her chosen ministers, can speak to an alienation endemic in parts of Britain which is as much psychic as economic, as much to do with a shrivelled sense of self as with an empty purse.

She is not balanced, finally, by a judgment of where Britain now stands in the world. She cannot be, if she can approve party propaganda which shows a British bulldog again triumphant over French poodles, German dachshunds and the rest. She cannot be, if she switches from cooing to snarling over the Soviet Union within a month, as she judges electoral advantage dictates.

It is in these ways in which Mrs Thatcher is unbalanced. She is perfectly sane, but perfectly narrow. Any prime minister must have a vision: but must also have an ear for that part of the country — much more than half, in Mrs Thatcher's case — which will suffer under it, does not want it or is at best distrustful of it. The Prime Minister has had a vision, for certain: but she cannot listen to the cries of those over whom it has rolled. □

NS out early next week

The *New Statesman* will be on your newsstands and in the post to subscribers by **Tuesday** next week (9 June) — two days before polling day.

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CAMPAIGN DIARY

Derby

Monday: The Bank Holiday came with strong winds and a blur of Whitsun weddings, glimpsed as our campaign car scuds around Derby. My sixth election here — the first as challenger — in Labour's 47th Marginal is pulled along by Labour's strong start. After bad local election results in the East Midlands we had anticipated a struggle to dispel pro-Alliance stories that the real race was for second place. Last time, in 1983, our supporters took a pounding, kept their faces to the foe and their thoughts to themselves. This time even old critics of Neil Kinnock are elated that he has seized the initiative.

The counter-offensive of the second week is what we expected; an onslaught on defence, with its latest echoes on the doorsteps, and the worst that the Murdoch papers can devise. People who can write as *Sun* and *News of the World* journalists have done about Roy Hattersley, at this time, and still go home to dinner, beggar belief.

The Hat himself comes over from Birmingham to rally the faithful, bruised but still bouncing. The Tory party political broadcast adds the political smear to the personal. This McCarthyite broadcast, which caused grave misgivings in the BBC before it was transmitted, sets the tone of the Tory campaign. I feel aggrieved not to be on the list of 101. Everyone else in Derbyshire seems to be. The Liberals' CND wing can hardly be happy at David Steel's eagerness to provide a little lift for the Tories.

○

Tuesday: It's our first meeting, of the sequence we hold in every ward. (By contrast our Tory opponents hold one closed invitation-only rally, at which Geoffrey Howe is drowned by the yells and the appeals from an indoor cricket pitch next door.) Austin Mitchell comes over from Great Grimsby, ruefully showing an election newspaper which has captioned a photograph of him 'Grimsby can do better'.

This is in the great tradition of East Midlands gaffes. When Percy Grieves contested Lincoln his posters shouted 'Grieve for Lincoln'. Candidates believe, however, that all publicity is good publicity. Rumour has it that down in Leicester Peter Bruinvels, who has offered to hang every murderer for the last four years, is now prepared to hang himself if the press will come.

Canvassing on a big estate, I lose both keys to my car in a single afternoon. Collapse for some hours of stout Labour Party. Two days later I'm given them back by a pensioner in a local pub. 'They had to be yours,' he said, 'Losing everythin'. Mind you don't lose t'poll'. Nice to be known, for faults as well as virtues.

Next morning, my 50th birthday, our Party treasurer buys me a present — an echo key ring. Whistle and it burbles back at you. The only trouble is that when the car ignition is on, the ring bleeps frantically whenever Mrs Thatcher comes over on the radio. Those carefully Reeced tones are cracking, moving up an octave.

○

Saturday: Being 50 on Saturday means a cake in the market square, where Labour and Tory take up a traditional hustings with balloons, videos (ours), canned music (theirs) and general insults when my opponent, Mr Greg 'Silent' Knight appears in a straw boater with his name on it. This Paddington Bear labelling adds to the schoolboy style of the Tories, who cluster to jeer at our Kinnock video.

Our agent appears with a bunch of red roses. (Almost every Derby shop has sold out of them.) He presents them to the Tory agent at her stall, as cameras click. 'Did you see, she accepted them?' John Beadle is a phenomenon — an agent since 1950 and the best in the country. He appears similarly disguised in the novels of Melvyn Bragg. He's a frustrated newspaper editor, film director, travel-club operator and night-club crooner.

This weekend he's up all night with a volunteer squad, putting a poster on every lamp post along the route of the Derby half marathon, and a few extra round the Tory water-hole at the Beaconsfield club. He's still on his feet 20 hours later to watch the runners in our colours come home in the race.

○

Monday: The real marathon ends on 11 June. Today is the Derby lap for Neil Kinnock. (Mrs Thatcher managed a regal wave at the East Midlands airport but no more.) For the candidate on his day of a thousand doorsteps, grateful for a line in the local paper, the media circus that follows the Leader is something else. The regional press conferences have forced the circus out of the London ringside. Journalists have to address the conditions of England, find out how many names are on the hospital or housing waiting list and what number of shares in Rolls Royce are now owned by the Japanese.

Kinnock has kept himself steady through the pain barrier. He has all to run for. My sense of it here is that the Alliance has faded out of the frame. The Tories have not yet crumbled. The defiant self-aggrandisement we found in 1983 is still there, but with the first flicker of doubt among the Thatcherite colonists on the north bank of the Trent that they may be a minority after all.

Phillip Whitehead

ROGER WODDIS

The Unlikely Shropshire Lad

'It is possible to have an enjoyable post-ministerial career.' — John Biffen, formerly Leader of the House and Member for Shropshire North

From Woore to Prees the beacon burns,
  As Shropshire folk are polled;
But though they promise good returns,
  I might be in the cold.

Look left, look right, or if you will,
  Look closely in between:
The voice that favours reason still
  Offends the uncrowned queen.

They tend to be reduced in rank
  Who fail to worship God;
But being absolutely frank,
  I do not give a sod.

The butcher-bird will not discuss
  The food that fills her crop,
For if you be not 'one of us',
  Then you are for the chop.

The 'balanced ticket' was not all
  That drove Her Highness mad,
Nor shall I be, though others crawl,
  The sole unlikely lad.

If 'tis disloyal being blunt
  And wrong to speak one's mind,
Rather than be with those in front,
  I'd rather sit behind.

'Milestone in NS *wit', p11*

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Brum's loss of brass

THE SINGLE most telling fact in the flight of Birmingham's Labour voters was offered to me last week by Gordon Sherratt, the Director of Marketing at the West Midlands Engineering Employers' Association. Before 1979, he said, we had about 30 separate industrial actions a week. Now it's under three.

Almost overnight, a confident trade unionism, ready to stand on its rights, has crumbled. If the rights were usually to do with money then that's part of Birmingham's history too. Mr Sherratt called it 'commercial trade unionism', in contrast with the 'underlying principles' he came across in South Wales. As engineering firms collapsed like card houses in the early 1980s, the trade unions at first tried to regulate the fall (short-time, part-timers out first) and then bowed to the disaster. Brash and brassy Brum has given way, in many quarters, to an embittered and bewildered resentment, the sharper because Birmingham's loss of brass was so unexpected, its trade unionism lacking the political fibres of historic community struggles and an influential trade union left.

Yet recession did not originate the flight from Labour. In the decade 1974-83, the Labour vote in Birmingham fell by over 30,000 to below 200,000. Ron Marston, the TGWU Regional Officer and leading figure in Trade Unionists for Labour, said there is 'no doubt that in 1979 people believed the media, that trade unions are too powerful'. He thinks the sizeable Tory working-class vote is less a vote of confidence in the Conservatives than a vote against Labour. Labour and trade unions once offered workers with limited political ambitions the best way to better themselves — housing and education through the party, high wages through the unions — but by 1979 Labour appeared as the block on advancement.

There is another West Midlands tradition, too, running alongside the right-wing labourism, and one which nobody seems happy to talk about. It shocked the nation in 1964 when an openly racist campaign by the Tory candidate in Smethwick won a supposedly safe Labour seat from Patrick Gordon Walker. It was in Birmingham that Enoch Powell chose to make his infamous 'rivers of blood' speech, deliberately stepping outside the bounds of what was politically acceptable to prophesy, or promote, racial apocalypse. A West Bromwich by-election in 1973 marks the only spot where the National Front did not lose its deposit.

By common accord, Labour lost control of Wolverhampton council in May because it had put up money to fly over the mother of a black man who died after an incident involving the police. Revulsion against Labour appearing to stand for blacks (in this case a black victim and his mother) against whites (in this case the police) appears to sweep aside the fragile notion of civil liberties. Though the National Front has been deeply damaged by internal disputes, it is said to be making some headway among the most neglected, degrading tower blocks in town.

To a question about racism, Roy Marston responds with a story. A pensioner said to him he had just travelled in through Tysley, where the factories have been flattened. 'I remember', said the old man, 'when if you walked slowly through Tysley you were offered a job by the time you got to the other side.' Now many of Birmingham's industrial sites, as in other cities, sport the 1980s designer landscape: land turfed over, like wallpaper over a graveyard. Fascism breeds well in an atmosphere of death and dereliction.

Hostility to blacks and fear of racism are equally powerful, negative forces in the West Midlands, to which its long right-wing labour tradition is particularly ill-equipped to respond. It is not surprising that most of the Labour MPs viewed the prospect of a highly publicised Black Sections meeting with such horror. How would they explain this to their constituents, either the older Asian leaders who view the London-based black hard left with antipathy, or the white voters who would have all their prejudice confirmed? They weren't even going to try.

Clare Short on the left and John Spellar on the right of the Birmingham Labour Party: 'almost as far apart as it's possible to be'

John Spellar, firmly on the right of the Labour party, is a candidate for Northfield, the constituency where a white backlash is most feared. Sitting on the border with Hereford and Worcester, with an almost exclusively white population, Northfield has swung in ten years from being a safe Labour seat with a 10,000 majority to being a Tory marginal. After half an hour canvassing a smart and attractive housing estate that looked like classic Tory ground, he had got half a dozen Labour posters up and found one Tory voter. ('Well Neil Kinnock's just a pretty little boy,' said the woman derisively. But she, with two sons-in-law in the army and an unshakable conviction that no one need be unemployed, had never voted Labour.)

John Spellar's dilemma was clearest with a middle-aged, skilled worker at Longbridge. Yes, said the man, he thought he would vote Labour. Had he at the local election, when Labour did so badly? No, he said firmly, he'd voted Tory. Labour gave money to 'gays, lesbians and ethnics'. His face curled in distaste. Was he against them getting any council money? No, he said cautiously, 'but it ought to be the same'. He too had a conviction, this time that blacks and gays could walk off with fat grants from Labour councils, while white heterosexuals got nothing. Whether his conviction is equally unshakable cannot be known without a Labour political campaign to explain its principles of spending and representation, its approach to equal opportunities, and there has been scant sign of that.

Though John Spellar and Clare Short, doughty left-wing MP for Birmingham Ladywood, are almost as far apart in the Labour Party as it's possible to be, they both agree that the political presentation of Labour's approach to gays and blacks has been abysmal. The sums of money may be so small that they only have symbolic value. But how powerful that symbolism is to a white working class that is jealous and fearful of its standing. Not the least hostile to any whiff of preference is the large Irish community, its economic position precarious, its political standing even more so; it's not that long since its security was almost swept away overnight in the eruption of a lynch mob atmosphere after the Birmingham pub bombings.

Scanning the list of nominations for Sparkbrook's local council candidates, the papers bear an equal number of Irish and Asian names. Last Thursday, it was Asians who filled Roy Hattersley's committee rooms. It was Eid, they said wryly, our Christmas day; but because of the furore over the reported advice of one imam that all good Muslims should vote for the Tories' Muslim Nazir Khan, and the defection of two Labour Party members, here they were in the office. The irony of a black *Conservative* candidate appealing for a racial vote seemed to be lost in the mix of irritation, consternation and confident nonchalance. 'Why are you bringing religion into politics?' Mohammed Rafique angrily asked the *Daily Mail* reporter. 'We're not, you are' replied the reporter with smug speed.

In fact, the fielding of Tory Asian candidates is politicising the vote. Just as Roy Marston of the TGWU said of the working-class vote, 'we're having to work for it; you can't just rely on loyalty any more', so the Asian vote, with its strong streak of conservatism among Muslims in particular, will have to be fought for. It is part of the old Labour style that the MP made friends with the bigwigs of the trade unions and religious communities and relied on them to pull in the loyalty vote: Roy Hattersley is very much part of that old way.

It is not a stable electoral machine. Though Sparkbrook's electoral machine seemed more disorganised than most last Friday, the support that canvassers found for Hattersley among the Asians ranged from solid to enthusiastic, a quality rarely displayed by the more grudging white voters.

Labour's morale high

Labour in Birmingham is confidently expecting to increase its vote. Roy Marston says that the atmosphere this time is quite different. Morale is high, not least because of the improved media performance of Labour. 'People are ringing me up asking what they can do' he says, and that's different. There's a fever to get rid of Thatcherism among some. Nor is Thatcherism loved by Birmingham's beleaguered engineering employers. Gordon Sherratt of the Engineering Employers is eloquent about the failure of the banks to provide the capital, the blindness of Mrs Thatcher to 'the pain we've been through'. Labour's spokesman John Smith is, he thinks, more highly regarded than the Tories because he *understands* industry. If they didn't fear the loss of the trade union legislation, they might even vote Labour, just to assert the needs of industry over finance capital. ▷

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Counting massively against the Tories in the inner city is current immigration practice and the implicit racism that most people hear in Thatcherites. Fortunately for Labour it pushes Labour's own past immigration policy into a backwater. The deep and continuous affront that is caused to this respectable, family-based community when immigration officials constantly dispute the validity of their family ties is palpable. The exclusion of family members seems wantonly cruel, a pointless gesture to racists who do not appreciate it; the charge that parents, wives, husbands, children only want to enter to steal jobs is merely preposterous. 'There are no jobs,' says Mohammed Arif. 'Everyone knows that'.

Still, sometimes people do try to trick the immigration laws, and Clare Short was propped up in the back of an Indian sweet shop dealing with one of them on Friday afternoon. She quickly arranged for his family to visit him in Harmondsworth detention centre before he was deported, but said firmly she had no sympathy for him. He had broken the rules, and when people did that, it undermined her credibility. The family, running one of the dozen small shops selling brightly coloured chunks of barfi (milk sweets) and 'saltish' chapatis in Soho Road, nodded acceptingly. Before the introduction of the visa system, intervening in deportation cases was one of the few cases in the lives of ordinary people where an MP could produce immediate results.

Unexplored political differences

Clare Short is aware of the dangers of patronage. In fact, her strategy as an MP has been to build constituency support which explicitly eschews it. She distributes her telephone number to all and sundry, solicits visits to her advice bureaux and worries if she finds one community is approaching her less than another. That includes the white working class who, she thinks, have been needlessly alienated from Labour by a lack of 'wisdom' in developing policies on race and sex. 'We have to build in a way that takes them with us, rather than standing on a position of no compromise.' The party, she says, 'should be a much better instrument to pull people in and then support them'.

But for all the individual members who share that view, there is no grouping which has the ideas and influence to initiate a new political practice. Nor are there many who have a notion of a party that is prepared to work *with* the multifarious groupings of Birmingham's black, Asian and left organisations rather than just look to them for voting support. 'Yes we support Clare Short' said the worker at the Shaheed Udam Singh welfare centre, with its stack of Campaign Against Racist Laws leaflets. But there was an ocean of political differences left unsaid and unexplored.

A copy of that day's *Birmingham Evening Mail* lay on the table in the Indian café. Under a huge picture of the Great Leader 'bringing the battle to Brum' it reported: 'Jaguar chairman Sir John Egan was showing Mrs Thatcher around the company which is making record sales in Europe and recently announced plans to take on 700 extra workers this year.' Between such a dancing soap bubble of economic revival and the hard slog of making political liberties seem attractive to all, is a chasm which can still swallow up the left in any of its forms.

Sarah Benton

Cries of London

A SUNNY Saturday morning in May brings the world onto the street. Some sail to and fro, towing little shopping-trolleys. Some fuss around mothering their pets or barking at their children. Others loiter without intent. Such was the scene along St John's Road, as I walked to the station. The newspaper placards said 'ELECTION FEVER': but the epidemic had clearly not reached Clapham Junction. It was business as usual.

Certainly the Jamaican evangelist was in her usual place; though coincidentally an adjacent newspaper placard announced: 'LABOUR PLANS A MORAL CRUSADE.' Middle-aged and severely dressed, she was haranguing passers-by on the left-hand side of the road, the Woolworth's side.

'Woe unto the world because of Evil!' Her voice shook with indignation, and she gazed at a partially-vandalised council-shrub in a council-tub, as though it were her Burning Bush. 'It needs must be that Evil come, but woe, woe, *woe* unto those through whom it come!'

Her words produced little effect. A white family had paused from their shopping and were trying to listen without being noticed. But others just shuffled past, eyes averted, both from her — and from her rivals, nearby.

Her rivals were a group of young men from the Workers' Revolutionary Party. They were selling the WRP newspaper *Newsline*. 'BUILD PARTY OF WORLD REVOLUTION!' suggested the headline, modestly. And (within) 'SUPPORT FOR SHARON ATKIN'. I bought the paper and asked about the split in the WRP. One of them, a Scot, older, sourer and more working-class than the rest, replied that there was no split, just the shedding of those who weren't revolutionary enough.

'Wi've got tae smash Thatcher,' he said, in a ritual voice — and then, with genuine passion, turned his invective onto 'renegade' elements *within* the left. He drew inspiration from *Newsline*: 'Out with the Class Traitors in the TUC!', 'Out with Peaceful Co-existence!', 'Forward to a black socialist republic of Azania!'

'Mercy and Righteousness!' called the Jamaican lady, urgently, from over the bush, the 'MORAL CRUSADE' placard a convenient sub-title for the hard-of-hearing. 'Give 'elp to the 'elpless. Hopen your 'eart to hexamination!' Then, grasping her Bible: 'See it here in St Paul's letter to Timothy: "In later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Hypocritical Liars. Babylon!' She sat down, perspiring.

It was not clear to whom this last passage was directed. Was it the demons from the WRP? Or the deceiving spirits over the road? These spirits were centred upon, not quite Babylon, but the Woolwich Building Society. There was a white woman giving away blue balloons and a man dressed as a teddy bear.

She was with the Woolwich. Young, pretty and blonde, she sported a big shiny sash in royal blue. You could have mistaken her for a Young Conservative canvasser — but that too, was coincidence. The balloons were for children and with them came leaflets for their parents. Both were handed out with an efficient smile.

The leaflets, I assume, announced generous home loans and advantageous interest rates: but that is surmise because, though I walked hopefully by, twice, she didn't offer me one. I didn't even get the smile. I was unshaven and (I'm afraid) shabbily dressed. Other deadbeats, like me, were not offered leaflets either. The leaflet was for people who looked likely to open deposit accounts, or buy houses. The balloons were for families with children. Fair enough. As for the rest of us, we weren't *excluded* from her offer. It was just that we felt we were not quite what the Woolwich had in mind.

Feeling snubbed, I turned to the teddy bear, who was dancing to a tape recorder playing — not, in fact, Purcell's trumpet tune — but reggae. But the bear had problems of its own. Unlike the blue-sash lady (whose appeal was sectional) or the Preacher and the Revolutionaries (whose appeal was for all, but were meeting insufficient response), the bear was coming over well with almost everyone. People gathered to pat him. His problem was that no one was quite sure what he was *selling*. Who was he with? Not, obviously, with the Woolwich; certainly not with the young revolutionaries who simply disregarded him as a bourgeois diversion.

It turned out, finally, that the bear was with Arding & Hobbs. He produced a pouchful of vouchers entitling the holder to one free coffee with the first (but only the first) danish pastry purchased at Arding's new restaurant, 'The Minstrel'. From such a cuddly, amiable creature, this message seemed disappointingly thin. Only coffee? Surely there was more? Were there no free lunches with this bear? It seemed, beneath all the fluff, that there were not. Many, therefore, who came to pat, left without the leaflet. The bear was scoring well on initial impact, but not following through persuasively on content. But he was doing his energetic best.

'Seek ye *first*' the preacher shrieked, suddenly, annoyed with our unconcern. 'The Kingdom of Heaven: and all this' — the danish pastry, blue balloons and Azania? — 'Shall be added unto you!'

'Down with the Capitalist Common Market!' growled the young revolutionaries. So much for the danish pastry. 'Smash the Capitalist State!' So much for the Woolwich.

'Mercy and Righteousness!' shouted the preacher, back. And as I walked on and away. I

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fancied that around the council-shrub zone, righteousness was gaining on revolution. But could she match the Woolwich? The bear was conducting an effective spoiling operation for, behind me, an unseemly squabble ensued. The bear had crossed the road and, a Woolwich balloon in one paw, an imaginary Bible in the other, was reggae-ing on the Preacher's patch. Hands on hips, she directed recriminatory glares bearwards — for he had interrupted the Sermon on the Mount and her little audience had strayed away to pat him.

The blue-sash lady seemed unconcerned. Blue balloons floated upwards into what was — temporarily at least — an unclouded blue sky.

Matthew Parris

The author is presenter of LWT's Weekend World.

'Pole-axing' Putney waverers

IS THE 'London Effect' hurting Labour's electoral chances in the capital? After losing the Greenwich by-election three months ago, the Labour Party told itself the calamity was a response to various London councils' policies to counter sexual and racial prejudice, as seen through the prejudiced lens of the press.

That (mis)perception of Labour could jeopardise the chances of turning Margaret Thatcher out of Downing Street: of the 80 Tory seats Labour must win to deny the Conservatives an overall majority, 12 are in London.

Fortunately, there's no evidence from opinion polls that Labour support is lower in the capital than you'd expect it to be. It's true that the *positive* 'London Effect' that boosted Labour's support in the GLC area from late 1984 to mid-1986 has worn off, as the campaign against the abolition of the GLC ended. But Harris opinion polls for the *London Daily News* currently show Labour doing as well in London as in national polls taken at the same time. (At the last general election, Labour polled 1.5 percentage points higher in London than its national average, a differential too small to show up in the Harris polls.)

The other way of looking for a negative London Effect is to ask: 'Which are the seats in London that Labour must win to keep Margaret Thatcher out of Downing Street?' To achieve that aim, Labour needs to poll 36-37 per cent of the national vote (8 points higher than 1983) with the Tories at 40 per cent (4 points lower). On a uniform swing, Labour needs to win every seat held by the Tories with a majority over Labour of less than 12 percentage points. The three critical seats in London, then, are Hayes and Harlington (Tory majority 10.4 points), Putney (10.7 points) and Ilford South (11.1 points).

In Hayes, Labour won 22 of the 23 council seats in the constituency in May 1986, with over 50 per cent of the vote. Of course, the Tories did spectacularly badly in those borough elections — polling 35.6 per cent London-wide against Labour's 37.5 and the Alliance's 24.1 — but the borough of Hillingdon, which includes Hayes, was one of Labour's best performances. The Labour candidate in Hayes, Peter Fagan, leads the Labour Group on the council and should clean up the anti-Tory vote, because the seven Liberals on the hung council have backed the Conservatives.

Ilford South is one of the less well-known target marginals, where Labour's obscure Ken Jones, also a councillor, is fighting Neil Thorne, one of the more colourless Tory backbenchers. Here Kinnock's New Model Labour Party is fighting a model campaign, with all-star appearances (Denis Healey last week) backed up by an Amstrad 1512 computer. The Liberal campaign is lacklustre: much fun was had at Labour campaign headquarters last week with a leaflet proclaiming 'Alliance rising tide of support: opinion polls show we are the main challenger in this election'. Labour also did well in Ilford South in last year's council elections, narrowly beating the Tory share of the vote in the constituency. The 'London Effect' issue of lesbian and gay rights rarely comes up on the doorstep: the issue that *does* is defence policy.

Targeting for Labour

The biggest battle of the three is being waged by cuddly lefty Peter Hain against Home Office minister David Mellor in Putney, across the river from Nick Raynsford's triumph in the Fulham by-election in 1986. Here, in the model Tory borough of Wandsworth, Labour was outpointed in last year's local elections, getting 42 per cent of the vote to the Tories' 45 per cent. But here too is one of Labour's most innovative campaigns.

'What we are doing in this election is targeting in a way we never have before,' says Hain, waving regally as his taped voice booms out from the top of his red campaign minibus. Personalised letters have been sent out to 19,000 Labour supporters already identified by canvassers, stressing how close the result might be — 'there might even be a recount'. Two versions of a leaflet explaining how the poll tax will 'pole-axe' Putney ratepayers have been delivered to households with two or more adults, who will mostly lose out. One, for council estates, also attacks Tory intentions to evict tenants to sell off blocks of flats; the other, for Alliance or floating voters, highlights issues of conscience and tries to mobilise the tactical anti-Tory vote.

The campaign is based on a computer analysis of 6,000 electors identified by Labour canvassers as 'possibles' and 'doubtfuls'. A sample of 150 of them were interviewed in depth by party workers, using questions designed by opinion researchers Popular Polling. This showed that about 35 per cent were really Conservatives, 25 per cent were really Alliance supporters and 15 per cent were Labour supporters who didn't think it was anybody's business. Only about 20 per cent were genuinely undecided or Labour waverers. 'The interviews told us nothing we didn't know already about the issues that sway them,' says Hain, 'but they did show that our classification of "doubtfuls" was terrible. The important thing is that they showed us how to ask questions to find out who are the real Labour possibles.'

The key questions on Putney Labour Party's 'Canvassers Guide' are now 'Have you ever voted Labour?' — 'people are willing to talk about the past who won't tell you what they're going to do next Thursday,' says Hain — and 'What do you think of Mrs Thatcher?' If the elector's verdict is favourable, however weakly, you thank them and move on.

Shaking hands

This didn't quite work out in practice last Sunday on a pleasant council estate in Roehampton, off the A3, as Hain's keenness to debate-and-persuade got the better of his minder's *sotto voce* 'this one's Tory' or 'she's not on the register'. But the questions worked on several 'don't knows' and two or three who had voted Tory last time: people who didn't like Mrs Thatcher were convinced by the argument that anything other than a Labour vote would let the Tory in. Together with Alliance and Green tactical voters, easily persuaded that it was a two-horse race, they greatly outnumbered Labour voters gone sour. Defence only cropped up once, and 'lesbian and gay' twice. One man said (as a 'joke'): 'Don't shake hands with him, you'll catch Aids.'

If the Effect can be shaken off, there is a big squeezable Alliance vote (11 per cent in May 1986), which a libertarian (and former Young Liberal) like Hain can attract. This is despite being listed as one of David Steel's '101 damnations' — the Liberal leader's list of 'hard left' Labour candidates — on the basis of a quote taken grotesquely out of context from his book *Political Trials*. According to SDP official Tony Halmos, who compiled the list, Hain wrote that a Labour government 'should appoint only judges with clear socialist or libertarian sympathies'. He actually wrote 'socialist or liberal', and went on: 'Doubtless this would bring accusations of "left-wing manipulation of the law". In fact, it would be a very modest step which would merely redress the political and social balance of the judiciary.' ▷

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In Putney and Ilford South, the outcome now depends on the national state of the parties. The collapse of the Alliance in the polls has removed the threat to Labour from its opportunistic attempt to benefit from the London Effect in Bow and Poplar (where Liberal Tower Hamlets council has evicted nearly 100 Bangladeshi families) and in Islington South (where Labour MP Chris Smith has publicly said he's gay).

The Alliance has also committed sins of omission in its fight against black Labour candidates like Diane Abbott and Bernie Grant in north London. Let's just say that you wouldn't know the Alliance was campaigning on a programme which 'believes that ethnic and cultural diversity is a positive asset enjoyed by this country', and gives 'a high priority to all aspects of the fight against racism'.

What the London Effect gives Labour's opponents, and not just in London, is a subliminal linking of three themes: sexuality, race and the hard left. Summed up in the euphemistic phrase 'the loony left', the complexities of these intertwined, half-known themes, which touch such strong reservoirs of popular fears, would justify a whole new chapter in Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilisation*. Labour's hope is that the psychological pollution of the Tory press can be drawn off by Neil Kinnock's sane and reasonable persona beaming from the screen on evening TV.

John Rentoul

Organic voting

IF THE Green party stands any chance of a 'breakthrough in British politics', then, supporters believe, it is likely to be in South Hams, a large constituency in the lush patchwork of Devon. Along the high-banked lanes between chocolate-box villages and farms, the South Hams constituency's Green Party activists are busily campaigning for their candidate, a former Buddhist monk.

Campaign headquarters is the candidate's kitchen, in an unpicturesque Totnes semi. Here the Green Party hopeful, Christopher Titmuss, lives with his small daughter. The house is in complete disorder. Someone has pinned up a map of south Devon on the kitchen wall and circled areas where there are known to be Green supporters. The 'best' area is Totnes itself. Ivybridge is good too — there are two Greens on the district council.

The candidate, asked what he does for a living, describes himself as a 'teacher of spirituality'. Where does he do this work? 'Round the planet,' he says with a slow smile. Chris Titmuss was once a Fleet Street journalist. He then spent six years as a Buddhist monk in Thailand. Now 43, he organises retreats and is the co-founder of an internationally known retreat centre in Totnes. Friends and supporters in the United States are contributing to electioneering costs.

In a recent book, a fairly sympathetic send-up of the 'alternative scene', Totnes is described as the place alternative people aspire to. In the high street the bookshops and wholefood cafés jostle next to the healing centres and small enterprises offering brightly-coloured, hand-made, ecologically sound shoes.

Small towns such as Totnes, Salcombe and

Dartmouth, together with dozens of scattered hamlets and picture-book farms make up South Hams. It may look very pretty, but local unemployment stands at 15 per cent. In the 1983 election, the Conservative Anthony Steen sailed home, beating the Liberal with a 12,000 majority. Labour mustered fewer than 4,000 votes and the Green Party's forerunner, the Ecology Party, lost its deposit with 518 votes.

In 1987 the Green Party is contesting 130 seats. The South Hams Greens will need at least 2,500 votes to avoid losing their £500 deposit.

Three canvassers, Ken, Clare and Caroline, are off to Dartmouth. Ken, a carpenter, studies a leaflet intently. He's a bit worried that he might not be able to defend every word — 'I'm a one-man Green Party, really,' he frets.

Caroline, who belongs to a small community dedicated to organic farming and meditation, advises him to stick to what he does believe in. But as the car descends steeply past the Royal Naval College into the town, Ken is still anxious. 'What would the Greens do about the armed forces?' No one is too sure of the answer.

Despite the sunshine, the holidaymakers are shivering in the biting east wind off the estuary. The Green canvassers have picked an estate which turns out to be a stony, unwelcoming Blue. 'We know which party we'll be voting for, THANK-you,' they say in clipped tones as they shut their doors.

In Totnes in the evening, Titmuss joins the three main candidates for a debate on 'Third World Poverty' to mark the charity-sponsored Walk for the World. He seems to be posing as the Tory, wearing a blue shirt and a rather regimental looking tie. Steen, the real McCoy, has no need to strive for respectability, so he's sporting a chunky sweater, disguised perhaps as a Green Party supporter. The Alliance is fielding a young Liberal accountant, Rob Chave, with a rosette the size of a dinner plate. For Labour we have, all the way from Fife Central, none other than Willie Hamilton. Every seat is taken and almost the entire audience is rooting for the Greens. They're even standing in the aisles, in their quilted jackets and embroidered skullcaps.

The questions come thick and fast. The audience knows a lot more than any of the candidates, though Titmuss and the Liberal have clearly done some homework. Steen rattles off statistics and says the Greens are in cloud-cuckoo land.

Afterwards, with a sleeping toddler in tow, the campaigners repair to a wholefood café, excited and optimistic.

What might the South Hams Green 'breakthrough' look like? Titmuss knows better than to bandy figures. He simply says that South Hams is the 'cream of the milk'. Indeed, no one is taking the voting business too much to heart. As Ken says, even if the Greens found themselves in power, how on earth could their policies be legislated and the present structures dismantled? He's convinced that only after present structures have broken down into chaos will Green policies appear rational to the majority of the populace. It will be possible then to introduce Greenness in a kind of, ahem, organic way.

Meanwhile, the alternative to alternative Totnes carries on largely undaunted. 'Police dog saves Totnes pensioner's life,' says the placard for the local paper.

Janet Hadley

Cambridge stakes

YOU MAY not have heard of Christopher Howard yet, but that may change on Friday 12 June. He's the Labour candidate in Cambridge, standing against a Mrs S.V.T.B. Williams, who sounds vaguely familiar, and the bookies fancy his chances. Coral's odds against Labour winning the seat have shortened from 10-1 to 2-1, nearly catching the Alliance, now quoted at 6-4 against. The Tory (Robert Rhodes James), still favourite, has dropped back.

There was no change in the parties' national standings by the start of this week. The Tories still have an 80 per cent chance of being the largest party, according to the odds quoted by the main bookies, and a hung parliament remains just a 25 per cent probability (3-1 against) at William Hill or City Index.

In the City, the Tories have risen 13 on the week in the *NS* Seat Index (based on how many seats two pinstriped bookmakers, IG Index and City Index, expect the parties to win). The Tories stood at 367 seats on Monday; Labour was down 5 at 229 and the Alliance down 5 to 37.

John Rentoul

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PETER KELLNER

Half way to Jerusalem

IT HAS BEEN the dirtiest election campaign I can remember. Week after week the *News of the World* has devoted its election coverage to sordid and irrelevant smears against the private lives of Labour politicians and officials. Last Sunday's issue contained not a single report referring to anything the election might do to affect the lives of ordinary voters.

Day after day the Conservatives have tried to frighten people not by discussing what is in Labour's manifesto, but by 'exposing' what it leaves out. And are there no depths to which the Conservatives will descend in order to abuse their opponents? Probably not. Neil Kinnock, meanwhile, continues to fight a blisteringly effective campaign. He has his faults. He can be long-winded; his rhetoric is sometimes devoid of meaning; his answers to questions sometimes sow the kind of quick-growing confusion that the Tories and Alliance are quick to harvest.

Here is an example: last Thursday, when Mr Kinnock defended Labour's defence policy at a press conference in London, he told Robin Oakley of *The Times* that he would be willing to put Polaris into any early East-West negotiations on strategic arms. It was an interesting answer, worthy of elaboration. A little later I asked Mr Kinnock what would happen to Britain's Polaris submarines during those negotiations. It was, I thought, a neutral question, designed to elicit further details of his intentions.

Mr Kinnock responded by talking about decommissioning Polaris within a fortnight, and how unlikely it was that it would be included in East-West talks. As a statement of Labour's existing policy, his was an impeccable response. But it gave the Tories and Alliance a few more hours-worth of abuse to sling in his direction. I mentioned my disappointment later that day to one of Kinnock's closest advisers. 'It wasn't your question that caused the problem,' I was assured, 'it was Neil's answer.'

DEFENCE apart, Mr Kinnock's campaign has been masterly. I should say 'Labour's campaign', but in truth the national contest has seen a promotion of the man far more than the party. In that first party election broadcast, the word 'Labour' was, as far as I can recall, not uttered once. The end of the film contained the single word 'Kinnock' as if he were standing for President. The front cover of the Labour's manifesto is dominated by a picture of the leader. At Walworth Road, the greatest energies are devoted not to what 'Giles' should say about schools, or 'Michael' about health or 'Denzil' about defence, or even 'Roy' about the economy, but to what 'Neil' should say about all of them.

Why should this be? Does Mr Kinnock have so much less understanding than Messrs Radice, Meacher, Davies and Hattersley about Labour's individual policies that he needs more support than they do? Not so: Mr Kinnock has his faults, but gaps in his knowledge about Labour's policies are not among them.

The main reason is that Mr Kinnock's aides and the party's campaign staff at Walworth Road have chosen to build this year's campaign round the personality of the leader in a way that rivals the Tories' packaging of Mrs Thatcher. There was no compulsion for Mr Kinnock's picture to dominate the manifesto cover, or for the famous election broadcast to dwell on Kinnock's qualities, parents, wife and children. These were deliberate acts.

> ***'Labour's policy at this election flows from the determination of a single man and his allies to devise a programme to win votes'***

Incidentally, I can solve the riddle of where the inspiration for that broadcast came from. It applied some of the techniques used to promote Hubert Humphrey in the 1968 American presidential election. He lost to Richard Nixon, but came within an inch of victory having started the campaign 15 points behind. Towards the end of the campaign, the Democrats bought airtime to show a personal documentary about their candidate. According to a contemporary account, 'it included a fairly breathtaking section in which Humphrey played with one of his grandchildren, an adorably pretty child who happens to be mentally retarded, and Humphrey reflected tearfully that through this affliction he had learned the power of human love'. Humphrey the family man versus Nixon the obsessive hawk: does that sound familiar?

So Mr Kinnock's campaign is not just presidential in some general, metaphorical sense; it is Presidential, deliberately and with a capital 'p'. A number of people can take the credit, or the blame, for this. They include Patricia Hewitt, Mr Kinnock's press officer, Peter Mandelson, the party's director of communications, and Philip Gould, who has harnessed the ideas of a number of advertising agency people who have been giving their services free.

THERE ARE bound to be some traditional Labour activists who regard all this as at best distasteful and at worse treacherous. Elections should be about parties not leaders, policies not images. According to this view, Labour's manifesto has jettisoned much that has been argued over and voted for at successive party conferences. Where is the commitment to abolish private schools, nationalise the defence, aerospace and contruction industries, and restore the closed shop? In the waste bin, that's where. And the decision has been Mr Kinnock's. The formalities have been complied with, of course: the shadow cabinet has conferred, the National Executive has met, and the Clause V meeting has endorsed the manifesto. If Mr Kinnock has dictated the party's policy at this election his dictation has gone without effective challenge.

Yet none of the major participants in this election will concede this fundamental truth. Mr Kinnock is instinctively a democrat; he does not wish to be seen in sole charge of party policy-formation. The rest, especially the left, of the Labour Party cannot bear to admit that they have become irrelevant to that process; the Tories and Alliance are equally reluctant to acknowledge that the terrors that once lurked beneath the surface of the party are tamed, or mangey, or dead.

So everyone has their reason to sustain the fiction that Labour's policy at this election is the democratic (or demonic, depending on where you stand) product of discussion throughout the party, whereas in fact it flows from the determination of a single man and his closest allies to devise a programme to win votes. There is no hidden 'iceberg' manifesto for the simple reason that Mr Kinnock knows that the components of that iceberg repel the votes Labour needs to win and then keep power: and he has the power within the party to block any policy with which he seriously disagrees.

That is how things are, but is that how things should be? If Labour's policy has become something to be handed down from the top rather than pumped up from below, does that not undermine the notion of a democratic Labour Party in which the leader is the servant of his members? The blunt answer is, yes it does. Mr Kinnock's problem, however, was that the machinery he inherited did not work. It creaked, it squawked and bits of it were dominated by manifestly undemocratic factions. During the later '70s and early '80s, Labour Party 'democracy' consisted of anarchy tempered by malice, in which fortunes could be made by betting on what decision which union would make the biggest foul up casting its block vote.

If the Labour Party were a country, then by 1983 it had reached the point where its democratic institutions had broken down, and most people wanted a strong leader to make the trains run on time. Fortunately, Labour is not a country; in 1983 it did not have some power-crazed general or demented ex-corporal waiting in the wings. Instead it had Neil Kinnock, a man of decent and democratic instincts whom circumstances have required to act as an authoritarian leader.

After next week's election, whatever its results, Labour will have to change. Its old 'democracy' did not work; its new authoritarianism must not last. A new, internal, democratic settlement is needed in which decisions are reached, and seen to be reached, openly and fairly and on their merits. By the force of his personality and the strength of his will, Mr Kinnock has brought Labour half way back to Jerusalem. The rest of the journey will be even more bumpy, and it starts next Friday. □

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Market freedom, programme control

BROADCASTING will be much affected by a third-term Thatcher government: patterns of provision taken for granted since the 1950s could be shattered if there is a Tory victory on 11 June.

The Conservative manifesto promises legislation to guarantee independent producers 'at least 25 per cent of programmes on both ITV and BBC', and 'more effective arrangements to reflect' what the Tories feel is 'deep public concern over the display of sex and violence on television'. (This is taken to mean bringing back a version of the Howarth Obscene Publications Bill lost when the election was called.) More vaguely, they talk of 'broadening the choice of viewing' and 'taking advantage of technological advances'. More specifically they intend to allow any development in the industry to occur commercially.

Ideas under discussion in Conservative circles before the campaign started go much further than this, however. Broadcasting remains one of the last surviving bastions of the post-war social democratic settlement. This in itself would be enough to attract Thatcherite animosity; taken with the combination of BBC wet paternalism and ITV's fat monopolies (see last week's New Statesman*), our present broadcasting system becomes a prime target for reform.*

What we could face by 1989 is legislation to abolish the Independent Broadcasting Authority, privatise Channel Four and put the ITV franchises out to auction. The BBC might lose some of its independence, and might itself be a candidate for privatisation — though not at once. The indexed licence fee has taken the edge off the financial argument, and the head of Alasdair Milne seems to have appeased Conservative dislike for the BBC, at least for the time being. The BBC will probably therefore be left alone until ITV has been radically restructured.

In planning such a restructuring, the Conservatives have been offered plenty of ammunition from within the industry. The independent producers are rather worried by the zeal with which the government picked up their claim for 25 per cent of production, since they want the rest of the system preserved as it is, and they are suspicious of other aspects of Conservative enthusiasm for the marketplace. Similarly, the independent companies have long complained about the IBA's expensive habits, funded by the high rents they charge for their transmitters. Those Tories who dislike quangos with an old-fashioned paternalist ethos (and the IBA is a prime example of such an organisation) have seized on these charges of top-heavy extravagance and have come up with the idea of a new single transmitting authority, running a unified system of terrestrial transmitters for the BBC, ITV and Channel Four — and without the detailed regulatory obligations of the present authorities.

Auctioning the ITV franchises would make abolishing the IBA easier. Auctions were proposed by the Peacock committee, and have a threefold attraction for Thatcherites. They guarantee the Treasury a decent slice of ITV profits (unlike the present levy arrangement, which can be manipulated to leave more money in the pockets of those who work in ITV than the government likes). They almost eliminate the need for the franchising authority to take any account of such dubious intangibles as the creative quality and public service ambitions of the applicants. And they make it unlikely that any successful applicant could be as unduly generous to its employees as the ITV companies have been over the past 30 years.

Now that the Home Office has come up with the idea of organising an auction on the basis of bidding a percentage share of net advertising revenue it has defused the most serious criticism of the auction idea. ITV advertising revenues fluctuate unpredictably; famine can follow bumper harvest (relatively speaking) without warning. Someone bidding for a franchise on a cash basis could be badly caught by a downturn in revenue; bidding on a percentage basis gives better protection against unexpected adversity.

It seems unlikely that many of the present ITV companies would retain their franchises under such a process, since their cost structures would leave them unable to bid as competitively as outsiders, untrammelled by such encumbrances. By 1993 we could have an ITV system run by the new media entrepreneurs — Virgin and Carlton as well as Maxwell and Murdoch. Such a prospect would not worry many Thatcherites, who admire those businesses which have earned success in competitive markets. The programmes on the third channel would look significantly different however; certainly there would be far fewer documentaries, serious drama and current affairs programmes.

The final plank in this new, less regulated world would be a mechanism to prevent too much sex and violence on our family screens. This is one reason why a new Obscene Publications Bill, which includes broadcasting, is vital to the Conservatives. In arguing against the recent Howarth Bill, the ITV broadcasters pointed out that the IBA already has the statutory task of censoring such material. This argument would be redundant if the IBA were abolished — the new law would have to do the job instead.

At the moment Channel Four is wholly owned by the IBA. Peacock recommended that it should be allowed to sell its own airtime; C4 executives increasingly fancy the idea of going it alone. These attitudes could be exploited by an incoming Conservative government to enable it to sell off yet another public sector asset. Such a move would simultaneously meet the ever-growing demand from advertisers for some relief from the present ITV monopoly, which seems to lead to higher and higher charges for delivering smaller and smaller audiences. An independent Channel Four competing for revenue with ITV would not necessarily increase the supply of airtime, which is what the advertisers desperately need, but it might bring down the price and force ITV to deliver more attractive audiences.

The appeal of measures like these to contemporary Conservatives is that they blend economic radicalism with social and political authoritarianism. This blend is the hallmark of Thatcherism. It is scarcely credible that a broadcast system based on economic monopolies and liberal values could survive the return of another Conservative government.

Diana Jefferies

The waiting phantoms

Lyons

BARBIE'S TRIAL was meant to be a major event for the French nation, a necessary step back into recent history. In digging up its responsibility during the war, in facing its collaboration with the Nazis, in shedding light on the Resistance movement with heroes and traitors, France was supposed to exorcise a painful past. But the interest of the nation has already flagged, largely explained by Barbie's absence from the trial.

This was a victory for Maître Vergès, Barbie's lawyer, who said that 'Israel's ways will not triumph in France'. He had already used the same tactic for his former client, terrorist Georges Ibrahim Abdallah. It was also a blow for the victims who were deprived of being able to face their torturer, and a major hindrance for the trial itself, as, instead of dealing with the 'crimes against humanity' for which Barbie was accused, the court spent whole days battling over procedural forms: should Barbie be forced, or not, to attend his own trial?

The lawyers of the victims were themselves divided on the issue and publicly argued the matter in front of a triumphant Vergès. A curious character, an ex-Communist who defended tortured Arabs in Algeria, a hater of the Israelis – as he proved in Abdallah's trial – Vergès is a 'very ordinary anti-semite' for Serge Klarsfeld, the most prominent among the victims' lawyers. And he has obviously relished his performance.

Barbie has been forced only once to come back and sit in his glass cubicle to face some of his accusers. With him, the tidal wave of the 8,000 journalists who flocked there in the early days, and retreated with Barbie, filled the ground floor of the court again. People walk in the alleys, shake hands, talk, gossip, munch, read magazines . . . An Israeli journalist of 62, who left Europe after the war with her own scars, is appalled by the way the trial has been handled so far and, most of all, by its lack of dignity.

Unfortunately, even court president Cerdini himself adds to the lack of tragic scope: his southern accent is better suited to Pagnol than Racine, and when he reads the names of the stations met by the last train of deportees which left Lyons on Barbie's orders on 11 August 1944, people forget the torment of these 600 men and women locked in the windowless wagons, without food and water, for more than 11 days.

Perhaps our modern democracies are ill-equipped to deal with crimes of this importance. Dry legalism does not match up to the enormity of the accusation. Some of the victims' representatives whisper in the corridors that it would have been better to get rid of Barbie with a discreet bullet; this only feeds the neo-fascist groups with renewed hatred. They are indeed very active now. The memorial of the dead at Izieu in Lyons, from where the 44 Jewish orphans were sent to their deaths by Barbie, has been profaned. The fresh flowers that are laid every day on the steps of the Court of Justice in Lyons are regularly covered with excrement. Maître Klarsfeld and some of the accusers have received insulting letters and threats of death.

Even Aids is now associated with Jewishness.

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An extract from a pamphlet distributed at the 'Foire de Paris' a week ago: 'Aids symptoms are mainly found in Jewish people of around 60. However, this illness has appeared in non-Jewish, much younger people. So studying the link between the two is an urgent need . . .'

A mother telephoned the headmistress of my son's school, asking that her boy should not share the same activities as mine, as hers wished to receive an education with 'Christian values' and she feared 'bad influences'.

The old phantoms have not disappeared, they are simply there, waiting . . .

Yvette Marin

Finding a real independence

Johannesburg

DANIEL DUBE is a slight, smiling if rather serious 36-year-old who works for the Swedish ball bearing company, SKF, at its South African plant in Uitenhage. He has just been elected president of South Africa's newest union, the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa), which was formed out of a merger of several engineering, car and metal industry unions two weeks ago. Already dubbed the super-union by South African journalists, Numsa's membership of 130,000 makes it the second biggest union after the mineworkers and a key force in the Congress of South African Trade Unions, Cosatu.

Dube joins other black trade union leaders like the miners' Cyril Ramaphosa and Cosatu's Jay Naidoo, still only in their 30s but at the head of the best organised internal opposition movement to the apartheid regime. It's a pity that P.W. Botha wasn't present at Numsa's founding congress. He could have seen black South Africans engaged in a serious debate about their country and conducting it with both passion and politeness.

The rules of parliamentary procedure were followed with exquisite precision. 'The house' was invited to take note, or vote, or accept or reject motions proposed by speakers who stood aside politely for points of order. It was far from dull. South African union meetings are punctuated by songs, and great litanies of slogans topped and tailed by a huge shout of 'VIVA!' which raises the roof.

The steady, solid growth of the black trade unions in South Africa has remained one invariable in the past 15 years of uprisings, necklacings, reforms and repressions. If it is allowed to hold its congress in July Cosatu will represent 700,000 workers, an increase of 200,000 since its launch late in 1985. Each attempt to incorporate or tame the unions has failed and President Botha's repeated calls since the whites-only election for the black unions to de-politicise themselves disappear irrelevantly into the thin air of the Transvaal.

Both Numsa's Dube and Cosatu's Jay Naidoo stressed in their speeches the unavoidability of union engagement in politics. But they also insist on the independence of trade unions from external political control. The Numsa conference adopted the ANC's Freedom Charter but added several qualifications on working-class control and democratic socialism.

South African workers have watched how, further north, trade unions have merged their identity with national liberation movements and been easily subsumed into post-liberation single party states. As Naidoo put it: 'We believe the ANC is central to a permanent, peaceful, lasting solution in South Africa' — but he stressed Cosatu's independence and non-affiliation to the ANC. Dube, too, insisted that 'the battle for the liberation of South Africa is not going to be fought in Lusaka or Angola but here in this country.'

Such statements are not routine truisms and require courage in arenas where anything short of uncritical adulation of the ANC is treated as little better than betrayal of the liberation movement and its martyrs. There is nothing the government would like more than to dismiss the trade unions as the internal industrial wing of the ANC and the fact they are much more than that is proving less and less acceptable to the apartheid régime.

With their insistence on training poorly educated workers to stand on their feet, organise, negotiate and lead, the unions have become a school for democracy that was never previously available in South African history. Dube, and Numsa's two vice presidents, are relatively new on the national trade union scene. But they could be locked up (as has been the union's general secretary, Moses Mayekiso, who was elected in his absence) and others, equally talented, will take their place.

The fear of a massive, crippling crackdown on Cosatu is almost palpable in Johannesburg. The biggest bomb ever to go off inside South Africa wrecked Cosatu's head office on the night of the election last month and other union offices have been burnt down. The South African Broadcasting Corporation ignored Cosatu's existence until recently when it began accusing the union of being an instrument of the ANC and responsible for acts of violence.

From Botha's perspective the right-wing backlash of the election could be defused by offering the unions' collective heads on a platter to demonstrate toughness. It would be a useless gesture and move South Africa quickly closer to civil war, workplace sabotage and black on white violence. If peaceful change is possible, and in South Africa that is a very big 'if' indeed, then the unions will be central to that process.

Some South African employers realise this but, despite all their public relations blather, very few multinationals do. British firms are notoriously anti-union, with the worst record on recognition agreements of any country. In the 1970s the British embassy had a labour attaché who became a legend for his helpfulness to the fledging unions. Ask today's union officials who Britain's labour attaché is and they haven't the faintest idea if there even is one. A Foreign Office high-flyer, 49-year-old Robin Renwick, is on his way to Pretoria as Britain's new ambassador. If he wants to meet articulate, committed, intelligent South Africans who one day will be in government he could do worse than phone up Numsa and Cosatu and ask their leaders around for sherry.

Denis MacShane

Present — and past — laughter

WE MARK two milestones in *NS* wit. First, Roger Woddis was an incredible 70 last month; he began on the *NS* under the editorship of Richard Crossman and continues, triumphantly, through his golden period of verse.

Sadly, earlier this year, 'Sagittarius' died at the age of 90.

In 1934, when the *New Statesman & Nation* took over Gerald Barry's *Weekend Review*, Sagittarius became its first 'resident' weekly satirist, and thus she continued, with unflagging wit and cogency, for more than 20 years. She was born Olga Katzin in 1896, of Russian-Jewish parents, and by the time she married the successful English actor Hugh Miller in 1921 she was writing clever and sophisticated verses in a number of periodicals.

In her 20 years with the *New Statesman* under Kingsley Martin's long editorship, her hilarious acerbic wit attracted more than one libel writ; and if Martin decided to seek legal advice before publishing her instead of afterwards, the advice he always got (and expected to get) was cautiously adverse.

She took great pleasure in the fact that it was she who introduced Vicky (a great friend of hers) to the *New Statesman*, and she collaborated with him in a number of books and pamphlets. She was a person of effortless charm and attractiveness, had a host of friends, and retained her shrewdness of perception to the end. She leaves two sons and a daughter.

C.H. Rolph

If the caption fits

No 20

That's enough of the election — Ed. Here are some foreign people, namely Ted Kennedy, Governor Dukakis (we believe he may be a presidential hopeful) and Jacqueline Onassis. Captions or bubbles for them, please, by Monday 15 June for publication on payment of £10 book token on 19 June.

No 18: winner

'A hairstyle divided against itself will not stand — the centre will not hold.' *(Tim Hopkins, Luton.)*

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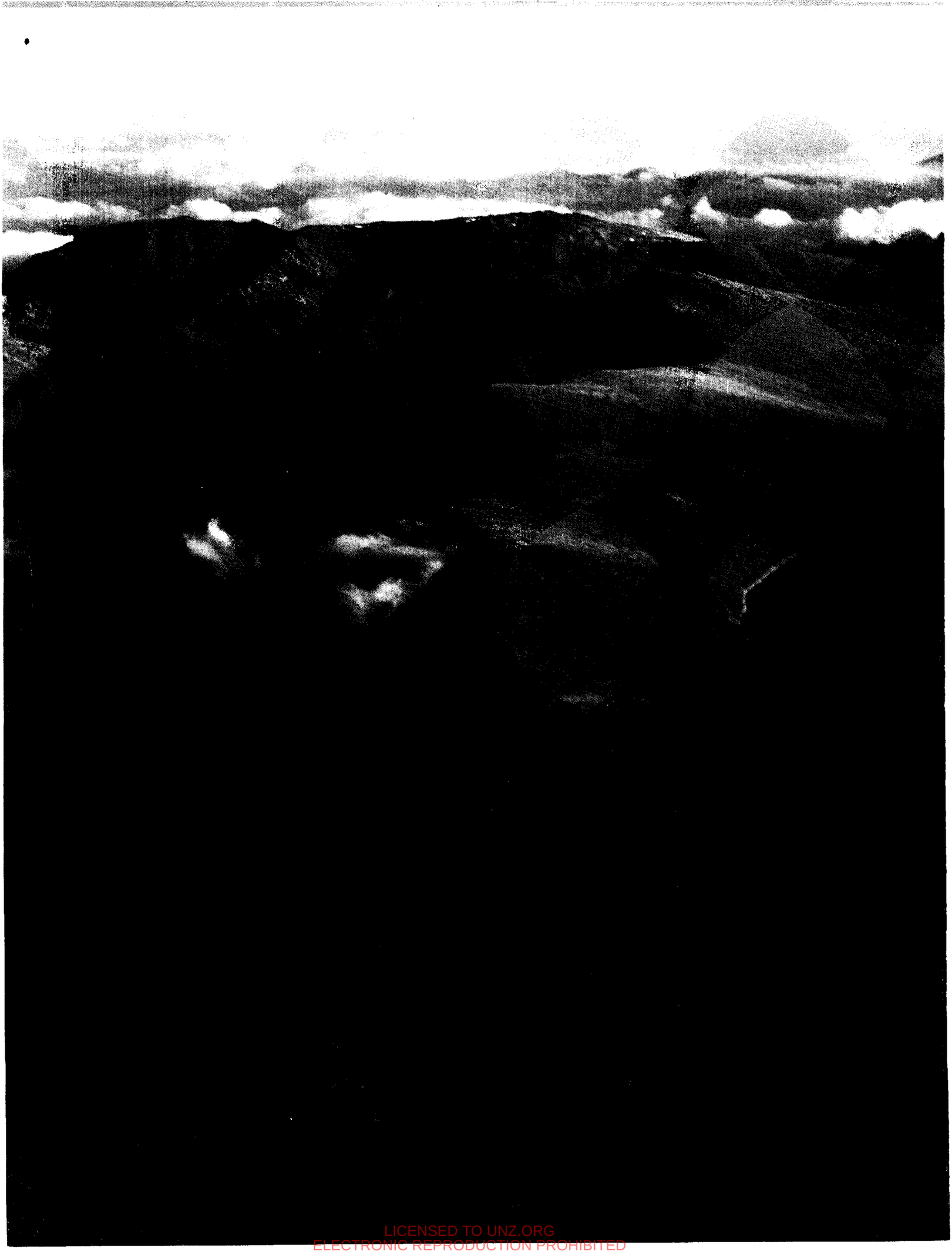

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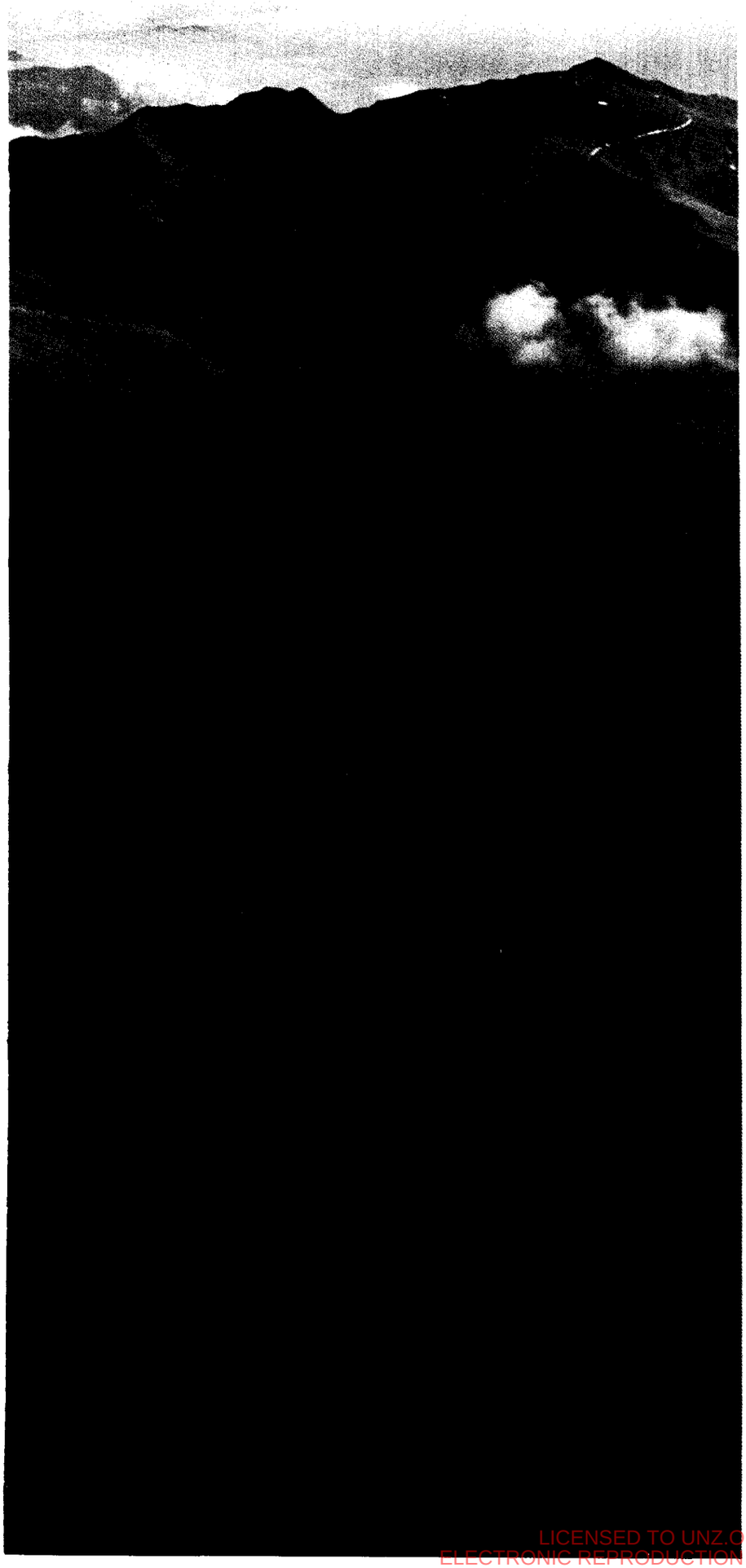

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The water is collected in a lower reservoir and pumped back up through the turbines at night, when electricity demand reduces, ready for re-use.

As you can see, the principle behind preserving the beauty of the environment needs no explanation at all.

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MEDIA AGENDA

'Sticking to the issues' (nearly) comes unstuck

The headline on last Friday's* FT *said it all — 'Labour checked in polls as defence remains central issue'. The official at Walworth Road was even clearer: 'In all honesty if it's on health, education, or pensions we'll win it. If it's on defence we'll lose. We've got to get the bloody subject to budge.'

PATRICK FORBES *with* **SUSANA ANTUNES, TOM ASTON,** *and* **PRATAP CHATTERJEE** *report on the battle between Labour, and the media for the election agenda*

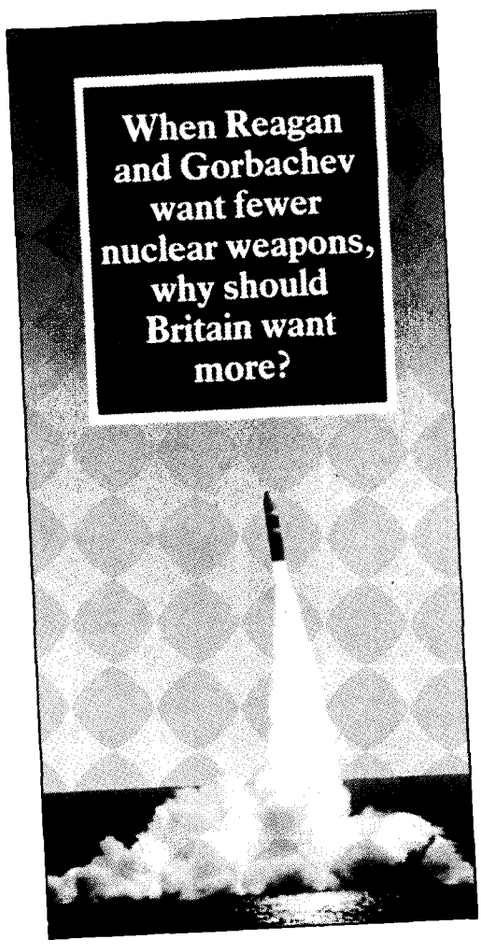
THE LABOUR PARTY is now the best political show in town. The advertisements are glossy; the policy holes have been filled in, or carpeted over; and for the first week of the campaign party leaders could not have been more available to the media, and the media more grateful. But last week the media, broadcast and print, sank their teeth deep into Labour's neck.

Richard Stott, editor of the *Mirror*, pointed to the cause: 'It's a bugger — defence; it alienates the very voters they're trying to attract.' A member of Labour's Shadow Communications Agency, which advises on presentation, was no more optimistic: 'It'll take a 100 years to change the agenda on this one.'

It is too early to estimate the extent of the damage wrought by the issue (the key polls will be out late this week). The party by last weekend felt it had weathered the worst of the storms. Bryan Gould, in optimistic mood last Saturday: 'I think we've come through the sticky period, and now I think we can move on to our agenda — tax, education, housing.'

That seemed to be the case in this, the last full week of the campaign. Both Labour and Alliance signalled over last weekend that they would directly target Thatcher — or 'Thatcherism', as Shadow Home Secretary Gerald Kaufman shaded it. That high risk tactic did at least force Norman Tebbit and Kenneth Baker to devote speeches and interviews to defending their leader, and to attempting the difficult trick of crediting her with all the virtues while avoiding the appearance of the 'doormats' Kinnock had described them as being.

On Monday night, in a *Panorama* interview with an uncharacteristically fumbling and flailing Sir Robin Day, Kinnock appeared self-confident, even on defence. The issue did seem to have peaked. A solemn discussion on *Weekend World* between the parties' three defence spokesmen made no headlines: a sharper debate on Tuesday's Radio 4 *Today* also failed to uncover new ground.



Labour should make a virtue, not a vice, of its defence policy

A pattern to the campaign is emerging. First week Labour in the ascendant, as they play their hole card — the decline of the Welfare State under Mrs Thatcher. Second week — Labour loses control of the agenda, as Kinnock's gaffe allows the Tories to play their ace — Labour's defence policy. After a week of frustration, Labour finally manage to turn the agenda back this week to their continuing ace, Mrs Thatcher — her lack of concern, her mismanagement of the economy. The Alliance, obscured from view by the smoke of two-party battle, chip in against Thatcherismus. But all is not going entirely Labour's way — the Tories are able to capitalise on Kinnock's remarks, in interview, about secondary picketing to raise the spectre of the winter of '78/79. 'Loony leftism', much more important to the tabloids than to TV, still lurks, too.

AND DEFENCE will not go away. The issue is too hot; it stirs the themes of strength, patriotism and pride on which the tabloid press will always play; and it carries the delicious possibilities of a sudden fissure in the generally well-disciplined ranks of the shadow cabinet. It is — to adapt an election image — an iceberg temporarily sunk below the waves. It may have checked the party's early rise — the polls vary in their evidence: but, as Peter Kellner noted in Monday's *Independent*, it has emerged as the issue most likely to dissuade people from voting Labour. The Tories will certainly try to play the card again in the closing days of the campaign.

When the Tories raise the spectre of 'Afghanistan' again, Labour will have a choice — either keep the party leader away from the press, as they did last week in the hope that the voters get bored; or go on the offensive — as they did at the end of last week. There is merit in both approaches — it is after all a difficult policy to sell — 'the equivalent to trying to wean the public away from hanging' said one shadow communicator last week. But it was noticeable that the fuss over defence only died down when Kinnock appeared at a press conference to defend his policy, and arguable that his absence from the London hothouse had fanned the row in the first days of the campaign.

While the party had scored its greatest perceived success in underpinning Kinncock through a hugely skilful Party Political Broadcast in the campaign's first week, its choice to put Kinnock centre stage meant that his slips as well as his strengths were magnified. And it was such a slip which allowed Conservatives and Alliance a way in to the ground which they would, in any case, have occupied. Kinnock's reaction to the coverage — 'We now have a press that is more irresponsible, more prone to slander, more filthy than we have ever had in this country before' — has some truth in it, but misses the point. Some of Labour's problems derive from the *responsibility* of the press.

You can't ignore a good story

By Saturday 23 May the Labour Party was luxuriating in the warm glow of success. The polls were moving its way; the policies it had promoted dominated the media; above all education. In interview at Walworth Road that Saturday, Peter Mandelson (Director of Communications) was confident: 'Slow steady advance, that's how I like it. Every day of the campaign we'll have a positive policy message; we'll be sticking to the issues. Defence? To a certain extent they've lost the initiative, what with Gorbachev and Reagan. We're well protected, I don't see a rerun of 1983.'

At the start of the campaign Mandelson had been terrified that 'Broadcasting organisations would follow Fleet Street's agenda. An agenda

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Conservatives: Saatchi man

MICHAEL DOBBS works for Saatchi and Saatchi and Norman Tebbit — in both cases he's their man in Smith Square; beyond that not a lot is known about him. All that can be said with certainty is that he is not having a good election.

Dobbs is Tebbit's No 2 at Central Office, charged with strategy and planning. He's on loan from Saatchis, where he is deputy chairman, and serves as their link, liaising between the account team back at Saatchi HQ in Compton Street, and the client in Smith Square. He won many of the plaudits for the Tories' slick appearance in 1983, but 1987 is proving a different story.

He and Tebbit are sharing the blame for the Tories' lacklustre start to the campaign. Tebbit should have been told to drop the issue of the LBC tape, a gift to an opposition keen to press the issue of unemployment. The account team at Saatchis are complaining about their lack of a brief; hence the curiously reactive nature of most of the Tories' ads. The ads themselves are not winning any awards; 'they're covering the right issues, but they're rather dull and uninspiring' was how one satisfied shadow communicator put it to me.

Even partisan Fleet Street is no kinder: 'Dobbs? He's incompetent.' And cruellest cut of all, Mrs Thatcher isn't talking to him. ●

created in the hothouse atmosphere of Westminster, where government information officers inject "news" into the system.' But it hadn't happened; as he pointed out, 'the broadcasters have to be seen to be impartial in an election — and we get an advantage out of this.' Accordingly Labour pointed its best face at the cameras and the regional news media, with Fleet Street a poor third.

Cowed by criticism over coverage in previous years, the broadcasters were sticking rigidly to the letter of 'impartiality'. Time and time again we were assured that fair shares for all was the watchword — BBC *Breakfast Time*: 'We've got to operate by BBC rules, and they're a damn sight tougher than the Representation of the People's Act.' Stuart Purvis of Channel 4: 'There is a basic approach of fairness that permeates all we do.' The IBA's Robert Hargraves: 'Impartiality is the word I prefer.'

Newspapers are not, of course, bound by 'impartiality'. And Fleet Street, as one political commentator sagely observed, had only two items on its media agenda at the start of the campaign: 1. 'Is the Labour Party in terminal decline? Prime suspect: defence policy' and 2. 'What is to be the fate of the Welfare State?' And in that first week this agenda seemed to have been destroyed — hence headlines were 'Neil Kinnock's week' *(Mail on Sunday)*, 'Alarm bells beginning to ring' *(Sunday Express)*.

But the Tories had yet to start their campaign proper. The print media were growing restive at their enforced diet of Kinnock photocalls — 'this week we're going to admit that Labour have just about got their act together, so that next week we can really lay into them' — unnamed reporter to *Spectator*'s Andrew Gimson. And, notwithstanding 'impartiality', the newscasters weren't going to be far behind any attacks on Labour. Why else were ITN crews in the *News of the World* and *Sunday People* as the presses rolled on the Hattersley smear? Why else had they rung up Messrs Benn, Heffer, and Skinner for comments on the Labour manifesto, but failed to contact Sir Ian Gilmour about 'The Next Moves Forward'? Most broadcasters were honest about their congruence of interest with Fleet Street: 'Well, we can't be expected to ignore a bloody good story can we?' said one BBC journalist.

'More a waffle than a wobble'

The Frost interview in the early hours of Sunday 24 May had been one of the few in which Kinnock was faced with an apparently sympathetic, low-key style. Tempted on to speculative ground (see box this page), he speculated incautiously. Joe Haines of *The Mirror* had the most direct analysis. 'Well, I think it was more a waffle than a wobble. And, as Harold [Wilson] always said, first rule of politics: never answer a hypothetical question. If you do, just talk him out.'

The broadcasters missed the importance of Kinnock's failure to 'talk him out' — Stuart Purvis of Channel 4: 'We didn't think it was a story.' But Fleet Street was waiting. The next day, *Today* turned over its front page to: 'FIGHT THEM IN THE STREET — A Labour Britain's only answer to Soviet nuclear blackmail would be the threat of guerilla war in the streets.' The *Telegraph* led with 'Guerilla war a deterrent, says Kinnock.'

One need not look far for the motivation behind the *Telegraph* story, but *Today*'s is more complex. Dennis Hackett, its editor, insists '*Today* is the anti-Thatcher paper, just write that down', but

That interview *(TV-AM, 25 May)*

David Frost: 'If you haven't got nuclear weapons, the choice in that situation would be to subject your force to an unfair battle.'

Neil Kinnock: 'Yes, what you're then suggesting is that the alternatives are between the gesture, the threat, or the use of nuclear weapons — and surrender.

'In these circumstances the choice is poised, and this is a classical choice between exterminating everything you stand for and the flower of your youth, or using all the resources you have to make any occupation totally untenable.

'Of course, any effort to occupy Western Europe or certainly occupy the United Kingdom would be utterly untenable. Our potential foes know that very well and are not going to be ready to engage in attempting to dominate conditions that they could not dominate.' ●

Neil Kinnock's first book

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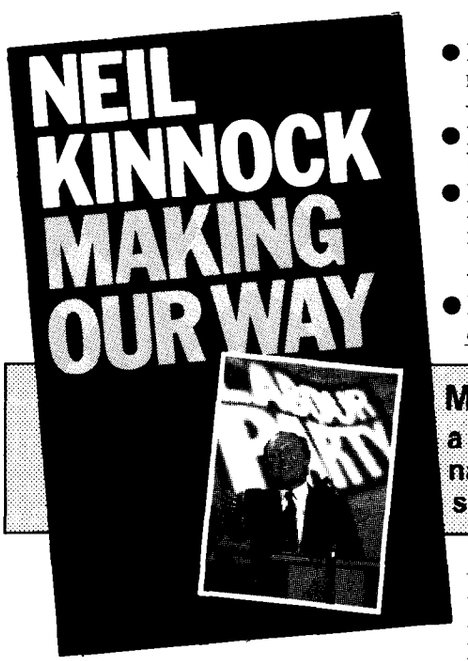

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Alliance: 'pretty important'

AS WITH the Alliance, its Head of Communications, Simon Lewis, is pleasant, approachable, and struggling to make an impact in this election.

Lewis is probably the wrong person for the wrong job. He lacks the experience and the party credentials to deal with the usual crop of Alliance problems. Behind the amiable facade of their Cowley Street HQ, Liberals and SDP persons are at each other's throats. As one despairing SDPer put it to me: 'In some rooms there are Liberals, in others SDP people, and in others, both — arguing.' Consequently, the golden talents of adman David Abbott of Abbott Mead Vickers are going begging — he's so far been restricted to writing the front two pages of the manifesto, and inflicting Purcell (the theme tune) on the British public — wilful underuse of the man, and agency, who have been so successfull in converting the British public to the merits of SDP love objects, Volvos and Sainsburys.

The decision to bring the manifesto out a day early was a disaster, ceding the initiative to the two main parties for the rest of the first week. The Alliance also faces two systemic PR problems. However much Lewis and others trumpet the ministerial experience of the Alliance front bench, there aren't enough of them, and that experience is pretty concentrated. Witness Simon Hughes' performance last week when he flourished a sheaf of blank computer print-outs purporting to be hospital waiting lists, justifying Joe Haines' comment to me that he was somebody 'any sane party would keep locked in a small dark cupboard throughout an election'.

Second, the campaign suffers from a lack of passion. While Kinnock and Thatcher are visibly transformed by the challenge of the hustings, Owen and Steel remain their dreary parliamentary selves. Neither Dick Newby, who's in charge of 'strategy', nor Lewis has the clout to change the situation.

Lewis, 27, was hired last year from top City PR firm Shandwicks to smooth over the cracks in the Alliance image. Shandwicks enjoys a particularly unpleasant reputation in the City. Lewis belies this reputation; candidly admits he wasn't a party member till he got his current job; that it's been a pretty gruelling experience ('How do politicians keep up?'); and that he joined 'because this seemed a pretty important election'. However important the election, it was noticeable, when we met, that he seemed far happier having a drink with the other young men in suits from the Cowley Street press office than parroting the party line. ●

both he and Chris Buckland, the paper's political editor, evinced a hostility to Labour's Chariot of Fire approach to the election. Buckland: 'Bloody stupid, it just sets him up — and that defence issue was bound to be the most important of the campaign — it's all about party unity. Look what happened to the Alliance last Autumn when they fell out over Polaris.'

Buckland's comments encapsulate the press's obsession with defence. The public rate defence only the fifth most important issue of the election; and the press shares the public's scepticism about arguments over first, second, or third use. As Dennis Hackett put it, 'defence? That's metaphysics, angels dancing on warheads.' But defence captures two of the press's received beliefs about Labour — disunity (Labour in 1983, and their current pursuit of Peter Shore's gnomic remarks), and the genie of 'Reds under the bed'.

Labour therefore had to appear unified, and it had to present the policies as being in line with the superpowers' enthusiasm for a denuclearised Europe, with Mrs Thatcher the odd one out. Bryan Gould: 'There's everything to be said for going over the minutiae of defence,. of saying do you want to work with the grain, or stick with Mrs Thatcher, who appears to be nuclear weapons obsessed?' But he was wise after the event.

The Tories fell on Kinnock's words. On Monday, Thatcher denounced his apparent enthusiasm for 'guerilla bands' — 'gorilla' bands to an over-enthusiastic copy taker at *Today*. Owen, who had carefully pre-released his speech to sympathetic papers, condemned 'Dad's Army tactics'. The Labour Party seemed curiously unmoved. At that morning press conference Mandelson commented to *Today*'s Philip Johnston on how much he liked *Today*'s condemnatory cover, because it had a large picture of a beaming Kinnock on it. Kinnock's only response was to condemn the reporting of his interview. And Central Office was eagerly stirring the pot, phoning up sympathetic reporters to concentrate their minds on the issue — not always with success; one roundly told a Tory press officer to 'fuck off'.

Notwithstanding this rebuff, Tuesday's headlines paid testimony to the success of Central Office's efforts: 'Kinnock arms policy savaged by opponents' roared the *Times*; 'Dad's army Kinnock under fire' quoth the *Mail*. The *Mirror* was the only paper to neglect the issue, leading with 'Hamburger blinds a baby'. Why, we asked Joe Haines, Mirror Group political editor? 'We've stated our views, so there's no need to do so again. I do not believe that any conceivable parliament, even one with a Labour majority would expel the American bases. Anyway it's a nonsense story — the Russians aren't going to invade. The polls show that unemployment, the NHS, pensions and education are the issues that matter to people, and those are the ones that we're going to cover.'

Throughout Tuesday and Wednesday, the party tried to wish the genie away, at one with the *Mirror*. This was primarily Mandelson's idea — as one disenchanted party worker at Walworth Road put it; 'He believes that if you don't talk about it, it'll go away as the voters get bored with hearing about it from the other lot. But it left us uncovered, and looking foolish when people didn't turn up on programmes like Radio 4

Labour: meaningful photocalls

PETER MANDELSON has, with Bryan Gould, emerged as the star of Labour's campaign — earning the ultimate plaudit when the Tories turned their fire last week on Labour's 'slick professionalism'.

Mandelson laid the PR foundations for Labour: assembling the enviably efficient Shadow Communications Agency: ensuring that Labour's press office was composed of people who had worked in a press office before, unlike 1983; and above all, keeping the campaign as accessible to the broadcast media, as distinct to the hounds of Fleet St, as possible.

He's also enviably cool under fire. I was in his office when the call from the *Sunday People* came through alerting him to the *News of the World*'s Hattersley smear. His response was impeccable: 'Ah Nigel, another smear — well, David Steel won substantial damages over his story; perhaps we'll make another leap in the polls.' His equanimity had the desired result; the *People* didn't run the story, much to the chagrin of the ITN crew, in situ at the *People* hoping to see them do just that.

Privately, there are grumbles about the Mandelson 'court', an unappealing arrogance, and a paranoia about the press. This last can lead him into some odd public postures. In conversation he practically denied that the modern Labour Party ran photocalls. 'Photocalls? There's not one photocall that does not tell a story.' He said his aim was to ensure that the broadcast media didn't run 'superficial' stories. He defined 'superficial' as being the BBC running a news item about the peculiar nationalist strains in the first Tory Party Political, as opposed to running a story about the launch of the Labour Party's jobs policy. An ITN reporter, sympathetic to Labour, complained: 'He has a blind spot about what constitutes news. The information that the Labour Party opposes unemployment is not "news".'

Nevertheless, if Labour does win the election, Neil Kinnock will have cause to thank all those responsible for appointing a former LWT producer as the party's Director of Communications. ●

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Today.' It is arguable that with an unpopular policy Mandelson's instincts were right. Roger Boulton, editor of *This Week*: 'I think it was a very ingenious thing to get Mr Kinnock out into the country, *but* now he's back he's going to get a hard pounding on things like defence.' But it is also arguable that it allowed the Tory press a few days to deride Kinnock, such as the *Daily Mail*'s 'No Questions please — I'm Kinnock' cover of Thursday.

Unsurprisingly Kinnock's press conference on Thusday morning, his first in London since the launch of the manifesto, was dominated by defence. His speech on the economy went the way of the previous day's pronouncements on health and crime.

Kinnock closed a conference in which all the questions circled round the defence issue by lambasting the press for ignoring the real concerns of the electorate. But, interestingly, however lacklustre his performance, Kinnock had stilled the debate. By Friday he was able to ignore defence, visit Liverpool and kill the canard planted by Liberal MP David Alton that he was running scared of being pictured with Derek Hatton or candidate Terry Fields, proving, as Haines put it at that morning's *Mirror* press conference, that he was capable of killing the enemy with conventional weapons. Hopes are high at Walworth Road that the Tories were forced into 'playing their defence card two weeks too early and the issue is now moribund for the rest of the campaign'. Bryan Gould: 'Oh it's just a Polaris blip, it was inevitable that defence was going to come up.'

Hit, but not sunk

So, in the campaign's second week, defence was introduced via the Frost interview, dominated coverage and has appeared to stall the party's advance. But it has not destroyed its campaign, as it very largely did in 1983. Instead, the party machine was able to pull the coverage back on to its own ground — unemployment, a divided Britain, the policies and governing style of the Prime Minister — and to begin this last full week on the attack, with a *Newsnight* poll showing Labour ahead in Tory-held marginals and a *Daily News* poll claiming that Labour had closed the Tory lead in London to five points.

The interlocking of media and politics in this election is at least as complex as in any in the past: specifically, we have seen new extremes. At one, the right-wing tabloid press — especially the *News of the World* — has been prepared to display a range of sexual revelations and allegations unprecedented in their intrusiveness and their irrelevance to the political process. At another, television has appeared more than ever in thrall to the photo opportunity and the stunt.

But both the press and broadcast media have also shown themselves willing to carry debate and analysis on the issues in at least as full and (on TV and radio) impartial a way as before. They have impressed foreign journalists based here, or sent here to cover the election; says Michel Roche of the French news weekly *Le Point*: 'I have never seen such full coverage anywhere, not on the Continent, not in America.' The focus on personalities in the Italian election campaign — also up and running — wholly eclipses that in the British media.

But — a further complication — the boundaries between media and politics become harder to define. 'Loony leftism', first pioneered by the tabloids, is then fed back to the media via the Alliance's '101 Damnations'. Kinnock's defence 'gaffe' had much more to do with a temporary treatment of an interview as a free-running conversation than any attempt to define Labour's defence policy — but it became cast in granite as soon as Central Office could turn it round and plausibly read it back to the media as just that. The Alliance's main problem becomes how its leaders look in TV studios.

One further strand. As the defence issue showed, the treatment of any aspect of party policy is at least as much determined by the current themes and consensuses in the media and intellectual community as by an abstract and pure world where fairness and balance is all. The perceived centrality of defence policy to Labour's internal coherence means that attention focuses relentlessly upon it: not in itself 'unfair' until compared with the lack of attention paid to the Prime Minister's dramatic about-face from handmaiden to peace and disarmament in Moscow in April to ice-cold warrior in May and June.

But Labour — and the Alliance — have managed to dramatise the themes of unemployment and poverty, of divisiveness and waste. Where, in 1983, defence sank a frail craft, the countervailing moral force of Labour's attack on social deprivation keeps it at least afloat. Can it move forward again next week? □

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CITY

Off the hustings and into reality

The City of London isn't really frightened of a Labour victory — and Labour shouldn't be frightened of sensibly reforming the City, writes
DAVID GOODHART

THE ONLY time in recent memory that the City of London and the financial system featured, even indirectly, as an election issue was in February 1974, when the speculative property boom provided useful platform imagery for Harold Wilson. Despite Labour's instinctive hostility to the City — a prejudice it clearly shares with the majority of the population — it has been consistently unable to turn City fraud or even the funding of industry into vote-winning themes. City issues have remained remote and arcane, City crimes without obvious victims; even parliamentary debates on these matters usually attract no more than a handful of MPs.

Six months ago it looked suddenly as if the City might slip from the shadows onto the hustings. The Guinness affair was raging and every day brought fresh revelations of financial skulduggery; industrialists were moaning about the destructive effect of short-termism; and the huge salaries of the City's gilded youths were still a fertile source of outrage. Also, the spread of individual share ownership ensured that investor protection and City regulation was no longer an academic matter for millions of people. Some of Labour's most articulate voices — John Smith, Bryan Gould, Robin Cook — played the issue for all it was worth.

But as soon as insider dealing and nominee funds disappeared from the front pages (and Pilkington successfully fought off BTR) the political potential seemed to fizzle away. Even Ernest Saunders, the disgraced former boss of Guinness, seems incapable of re-kindling the City as a live election issue. The timing — and perhaps even fact — of his arrest, like Keith Best's appearance in court, probably had some political impetus but an embittered Saunders is unlikely to be able to turn the tables on his former Tory friends; any attempt to implicate other senior City or business figures would be an implicit admission that he knew what they were doing and did not stop it.

Scandals needed

Realistically, for the City to have become even a second-rank election issue it would have needed: three or four Guinness scandals; a sharply falling market to hurt all those virgin shareholders; and perhaps some earlier than expected fall-out from Big Bang dropping on a few well-known securities firms. Even in such circumstances it is not clear that the opposition parties would have benefited. For the other reason the City has remained on the sidelines is the government's skill in defusing the issue. Swift action at Guinness was followed by an equally dramatic intervention at Morgan Grenfell by the Bank of England. And the Tories were in the fortunate position of being able to parry any complaints about the system of regulation by pointing out that the Financial Services Act and the Securities and Investments Board were not yet in place.

IT IS, ironically, the Tory manifesto which makes the greatest play of the City despite the Party's supposed vulnerability on the matter. The manifesto boasts of sweeping away restrictive practices in the City, like other sections of British industry, and clamping down on City fraud with as much vigour as on street crime. This may be a little parsimonious with the truth but, at least on the parochial City issues, it has left Labour and the Alliance haggling over what, to the electorate, must seem esoteric distinctions in the functioning of the Securities Investment Board. Compared with many other issues there is actually a surprising degree of cross-party consensus on the City. The connection between City 'sleaze' and the Tory party has been a theme of Roy Hattersley's speeches, but the generality of the point is a sign of weakness; and during the first weekend of the election campaign John Smith, in TV debate with Paul Channon, was reduced to complaining about the lack of an interim report on the Guinness investigation from the Department of Trade and Industry.

> ***'City realism towards Labour is the mirror image of Labour realism towards the City . . . the party's leaders recognise that challenging worldwide financial deregulation is a mug's game'***

There is, however, no reason for Labour to give up on the City as a theme over the next week, or several years (in or out of power). The appearance of consensus — reflected, too, in the mild tone of Robin Cook's recent document *Making the City Safe* — derives in part from the Tory stealing of Labour clothes on both competition and regulation. It was after all Roy Hattersley who began the legal assault on Stock Exchange restrictive practices which led to Big Bang. And the status of the SIB (perhaps two-thirds of the way towards the fully statutory and much feared equivalent in the USA) owes a lot to the Parliamentary committee work of Bryan Gould. It is partly thanks to him, and several Tory backbenchers, that the government was able to, Janus-like, reassure its City supporters (who now provide about one-quarter of publicly registered corporate funds to the Party) that the SIB is an extension of jolly-old self-regulation while telling the rest of the country that it is a tough but flexible statutory body.

Also, cautious though they may be, Labour's plans for the City and finance do have important distinctive features. The two most important are: repatriation of some institutional money combined with the formation of an industrial British Investment Bank; and firmer, independent, statutory regulation (to prevent the SIB becoming to the City what the Law Society is to the legal profession) along with tighter control over takeovers — the latter two policies it shares with the Alliance.

This package, along with an expansion programme which places a slightly lower priority on curbing inflation, and higher taxes for the rich, is viewed with dismay in most parts of the City. But a hung parliament, with all its attendant uncertainties, is viewed with horror. A surprise Labour victory would cause gloom rather than panic in the City: most institutions which are particularly affected by Labour plans have already made themselves as Labour-proof as possible.

Realism all round

Previous Labour victories have usually sent a temporary shudder through the markets, which have then picked themselves up and proceeded in whichever direction they were already headed. There is no reason to think things would be different now although there would, as always, be particular winners and losers in the equity market: capital goods firms should benefit and consumer goods suffer as Labour shifted the balance of the economy from consumption to investment. It is true that the growing interest shown by foreign investors in the UK's gilts and equities markets would come to an abrupt halt but, contrary to much journalistic hype, it currently represents a very small proportion of total investment. Also, as long as the UK economy remained sound, foreign investment would gradually return as Labour's moderation became apparent; on the other hand, a large Tory victory would cause a surge of foreign buying which could push sterling back to uncomfortably high levels.

City realism towards Labour is merely the mirror image of Labour realism towards the City. The view that nourishing one of the world's big three financial centres in London has somehow contributed to the decline of the surrounding economy is still popular among Labour thinkers; however the relevant figures in the leadership

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recognise that challenging worldwide financial deregulation is a mug's game particularly as financial services is one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy, employing nearly 1 million people and helping to cushion the impact of the manufacturing deficit.

The consumers' friend

But Labour should *not* ignore the City, as it has done in the past; the size of the finance sector and the growing financial sophistication of the population rules that out. Neither is it enough to denounce scandals and advocate a few technical changes to the regulatory structure. Reform of (parts of) the City is both desirable and potentially popular, in two respects especially: first, the City needs a dose of intelligent 'consumerism' to extend both competition and regulation; second, the old chestnut of the City's inadequate funding of industry is changing in form (and thus potential solution) from the cost and availability of capital to the City's malign influence on management attitudes to investment and risk-taking ('short-termism').

Labour ought to be well placed to champion consumerism in the City as it is one of the few places where it has no historic links with the producers (unlike the Tories). Most new shareholders are not rich and they are getting a shabby deal from Big Bang, with their transaction costs going up not down. The cartel-busting spirit of Big Bang also needs to be extended into new areas such as the scandalously high commissions on underwriting share issues, the Office of Fair Trading could be given an expanded role in investigating the pricing and transparency of all financial services from extortionate credit card rates (now possibly being tackled), through unit trust costs to the insurance policy commission rip-off. It is also still not widely enough recognised that most of the money sloshing about in the City comes from the savings of the lower and middle income groups and too much of it is still disappearing into the pockets of well-heeled financial intermediaries.

The funding of industry is a more subtle and difficult question; but with a little effort Labour could make reforming the supply of capital to industry as central to the late 1980s and early 1990s as the Tories made reforming the supply of labour in the early 1980s. A fascinating recent study by Colin Mayer, the Price Waterhouse Professor of Corporate Finance, should be taken as a starting point. Mayer shows that from 1970-1984 industry's retained earnings accounted for *all* new physical investment; and that despite our large and efficient secondary market in equities the stock market provided −3 per cent of industry's capital needs (the minus arising from shares being bought back for cash during takeovers). Combined with the lack of a proper industrial banking system it is perhaps not surprising that UK investment (and thus labour productivity) has been well below average.

Changing the culture

The problem is not so much the cost of outside capital, but rather the distance between lender and borrower (found in any efficient securities market) which creates uncertainty for the industrial borrower and thus blocks long-term investment projects, even when returns are reasonable as they now are in much of UK industry. 'The distinctive feature of successful financial systems is their close involvement in industry. A primary characteristic of a market-based system is an arm's length relationship between investor and firm,' writes Mayer. So our wonderfully competitive financial markets not only suck all the young brains away from industry, they also undermine growth. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence to support the view that the stock market depresses investment by expecting unrealistically high rates of return. The big UK electronic companies are always complaining that their European competitors are able to invest more because they don't face a share price collapse if earnings dip a little one year. The Centre for Business Strategy has also pointed out that the 'financial control' companies like Hanson Trust and BTR — stock market favourites until recently — tend to be risk averse and miserly about investment.

Changing this culture will not be easy. It is partly about mending the split between the citizen as profit-maximising short-term investor (through pension rights or insurance policy) and employee with an interest in stable employment and long-term economic growth; reforming pension trust law would help. There are also some helpful trends such as the growth of longer-term lending by UK banks (prompted in part by the competition from foreign banks) and the development of new markets in fixed-term debt. Labour is rightly encouraging this shift from equity to debt financing (which is in any case generally cheaper) through the BIB and indirectly through the capital repatriation scheme which should allow a Labour government to support sterling without having to raise interest rates. Discouraging takeovers will also reduce the need for large companies to constantly massage their share prices and thus loosen the discipline of the stock market. The question that remains is with what should this — apparently growth-stunting — discipline be replaced? It is a question that several City-industry committees are chewing over. If Labour can come up with a sensible answer it might go some way to shaking off its low credibility as an effective manager of capitalism. □

David Goodhart is a Financial Times *staff writer.*

David Hevey

Doing all right

JULIAN and Rupert are doing all right. Julian Wheeler (left), aged 20, a commodity broker, old Harrovian, lives at the parental home in Battersea. Rupert Crocker-Poole, aged 19, also a commodity broker, also lives at home in Battersea. But this old Etonian may vote Labour because 'the Tories have turned Battersea power station into a funfair'. Salary? 'About a grand' (a week) ●

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MEDIA

Thatcherism hasn't been exported to Holland

Tine van Houts

WE HAD A general election in Holland last year. It was a quiet affair. The main issues were unemployment and cruise missiles. The debates were serious and, in the eyes of one Dutch journalist who had recently returned home after a long spell as a London correspondent, shockingly boring. There was no flag waving, there were no calculated insults. 'Even in a debate they never attack each other directly,' he told me in amazement.

For the rest of the Dutch there is nothing surprising about this lack of animosity on the political scene. You don't, after all, launch a vitriolic attack on the party with which you might find yourself having to form a government after the elections. British politicians do not seem to suffer from such inhibitions: even the coalition-keen Alliance still has the old confrontation habit in electioneering, as David Steel showed recently with his scroll of 101 Labour leftwingers.

'At least in Great Britain there is a clear choice,' wrote one Dutch political commentator, weary of the wheeling and dealing in his own country. This may be so, but all too often that choice is totally obscured by the manner in which British politicians and the popular press deal with serious issues like defence and education. Neil Kinnock's remarks on defence were translated as 'Dad's Army' by the Alliance, and as 'he wants the Mujihadeen in Morden High Street' by the Conservatives. This style of campaigning is actually encouraged by the press. 'White flag Kinnock accused' is how the *Daily Express* explains the defence debate to its readers, while the *Sun* clarifies the education debate with the headline 'New bombshell for Kinnock: Labour picks a rentboy as school boss.' With a press like this, who needs Saatchi and Saatchi?

This latest '*Sun* exclusive' cleverly links a politician's campaign issue — education — to the issue the popular press started the campaign with: the sex lives (real or imagined) of the politicians. Diligent foreign correspondents have been searching the party manifestos in vain for this important election issue.

An innocent Dutch colleague, covering his first British election, has just filed an indignant story about the disinformation campaign in the British press. He is also upset about the politicians' obsessive preoccupation with other parties and personalities instead of the main issues. But maybe we foreigners make the error of treating the British political scene too seriously. In school we learned with great reverence about the Mother of all Parliaments. On arrival here, we find that a Conservative MP has suggested foreign tourists should pay an entrance fee for question time in the Commons. 'It's the best show on earth,' he says. Maybe we foreign correspondents should also learn to see the election campaign as the free outdoor summer extravaganza of that splendid cast. After all, why should we take it seriously? Nobody else in this country seems to.

Yet we keep wondering and worrying. How do you explain to your readers that a party with only 40 per cent of the vote can get a large majority in parliament? Or how another one gets only four per cent of the seats with 25 per cent of the votes? Or as my Dutch colleague found to his surprise: 'How can this country be governed by a party that has alienated the whole of Scotland and part of the north of England? I don't call that a democracy,' he said.

IN THE campaigning of all British parties there seems to be a total lack of feeling for compromise, and compromise is the foundation of Dutch political life. In the Netherlands we have proportional representation and, as a result, we always have a coalition government. We treat the country as one big constituency. There are now nine parties in parliament, of which the smallest needed less than one per cent of the national vote to get in. So very few votes are 'wasted', and this increases the motivation to vote: the turn-out was 85 per cent last year.

> ***'Thatcher's opinions seem to have led not to an economic, but a moral revolution. She might be remembered as the lay priest of the "me, me, me" age, a yuppie before the word was invented'***

The three major parties are the Christian Democratic centre party (CDA), the Socialists (PVDA) and the Conservatives (VVD). So in practice we will nearly always end up with a centre-right or a centre-left coalition. Last year, the centre-right coalition (CDA-VVD) was voted in again. The Prime Minister, Ruud Lubbers, remained in office, but it is still not quite the same government. The Conservative share of the vote diminished, which was reflected in a smaller share of ministers in the cabinet. Apparently, the Dutch voters had felt the semi-Thatcherite ideas of the Dutch Conservatives, especially on spending cuts, went too far.

It can take a long time to get a government programme that the coalition partners are prepared to work on together. It once took more than half a year. Commenting on this episode, Denis Healey said the Dutch seemed to manage quite well without a government. There is some truth in what Healey said. Since the coalition partners have to compromise so much in order to work together, they invariably stay close to the middle ground, and that means there are no great differences between one government and the next. In Holland there is neither the room nor the time for a Thatcher revolution.

Ironically, Margaret Thatcher has on several occasions proudly referred to the fact that 'even Holland' was now following her economic ideas, and that Holland especially went even further in cutting social security. She failed to mention the average income of an unemployed person in Holland had been cut from 75 to 70 per cent of the average wage. A spokesman for the British Department of Employment politely refused to work out a comparative figure for me 'as we are in an election period', but said the average British income in industries and services was just over £180 a week, while benefit for an unemployed married couple was just over £50 a week.

IN MANY WAYS, Holland and Great Britain have similar problems. Our unemployment is even higher than yours: 12.1 per cent compared with 11.5 (EC statistics for March '87). We had to cut back on our social services system, as the expenditure was partly based on the income of natural gas which, like your North Sea oil, does run out.

But the Dutch government has tried to find ways to economise by compromise, in order to hold the country together, instead of dividing it, as we feel has happened in Britain. Our income system is more egalitarian, and that shows in the streets — you do not see the signs of poverty that are so noticeable in parts of Britain. It also shows in government attitudes: the government has regular meetings with the unions and the employers. Dutch taxes will not be lowered; the Prime Minister says we cannot afford it. But working weeks have been made shorter in an effort to spread employment more widely. We do have a minimum wage. There is free wage bargaining, but the government warns the unions not to go for huge wage increases as that might make unemployment worse.

There is debate on all levels, but it is an open debate. When the Dutch Foreign Minister and the Minister of Defence do not agree on the double zero option, we read all about it in the papers, and a compromise is reached. A Westland affair is unthinkable. So would be Margaret Thatcher's presidential style of government.

The irony is that when Thatcher was elected for the first time eight years ago, the feeling abroad was that foreign policy would turn out to be her weakest point — while it now looks her strongest. Foreign observers were startled to witness how quickly Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, and how Britain turned from a very reluctant and belligerent into a reasonably co-operative member of the European Community. The devotion to President Reagan, and the basically anti-sanctions attitude to South Africa irritated other EC members, but the trip to Moscow was admired.

The export of the Thatcher revolution to the rest of Western Europe has been less successful than your Prime Minister would like to let you believe. But then British statistics, too, point out that at home, her words have been often much stronger than her deeds. As seen from a mid-Channel watch tower, Thatcher's opinions seem to have led not to an economic, but a moral revolution. She might be remembered as the lay priest of the 'me, me, me' age, a yuppie before the word was invented. In Great Britain today, it seems to have become socially acceptable to be egoistic. In Holland that is still not the case. □

Tine van Houts is a correspondent for NCRV Broadcasting.

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THE HARD ISSUES 1: GAY RIGHTS

Not 'out there'

CHRIS SMITH, ***Labour candidate for Islington South, argues that the case for sexual equality has to be made carefully***

LABOUR has come under attack over the rights of minorities. One of the unintended consequences of the party debate after the Greenwich by-election was that some leapt to the conclusion that Neil Kinnock had abandoned clear commitments and policies about the rights of minorities and the delivery of services by local government. At the same time, however, the by now famous Hewitt 'loony left letter' will have done little to reassure those traditional Labour supporters who are genuinely and understandably worried by what they used to see as 'their' party becoming out of touch and out of reach.

Let's take the most obvious and controversial issue of all: that of lesbian and gay rights. One point must be clearly and overwhelmingly stated at the outset. There is profound discrimination in Britain today against lesbians and gay men. There is discrimination in law: the age of consent, the question of homosexuality in the armed services and the merchant navy. There is discrimination in housing, where joint applications are made to local authorities or mortgages are sought from building societies. There is discrimination in the operation of the immigration rules. There is discrimination in custody case decisions in the courts. There is discrimination in employment, where some people are sacked and others are not appointed solely because of their sexuality. There is a new and potentially severe form of discrimination being practised now by insurance companies in their attitude to applications from single men. And over and above this there is, of course, the difficulty, the abuse, the hostility that many lesbians and gay men experience; intensified now by the tragic onset of AIDS.

All of this means that British law, administrative practice, and society treat a substantial minority as unequal second-class citizens. Any democratic socialist party must be committed to ending that discrimination, and to legislating for full equality. Neil Kinnock remains committed to that principele, and has stated so very clearly, both before *and after* the Patricia Hewitt letter furore. He restated it again to me before the election campaign.

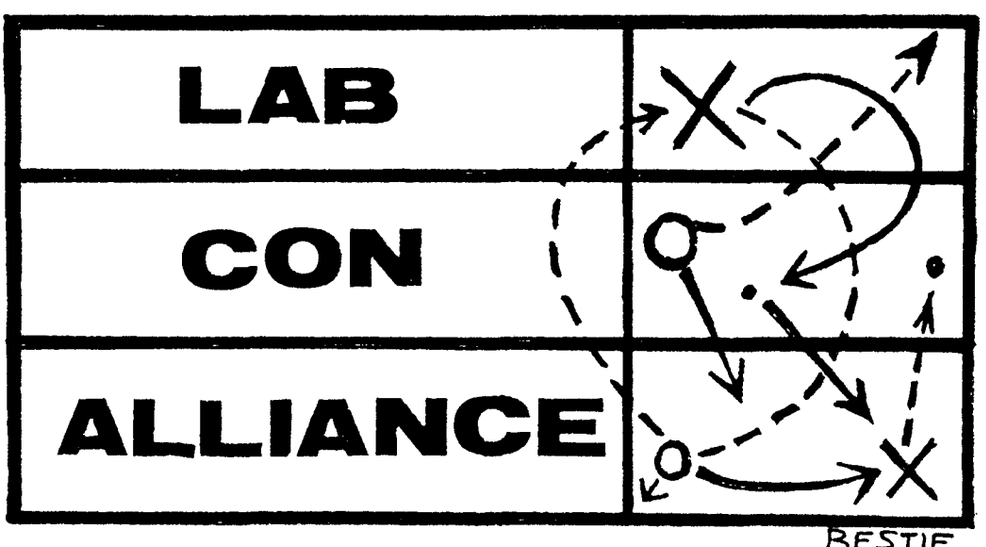
AT TIMES our commitment to equality, however, has become sadly clouded by all sorts of extraneous rhetoric, gestures, and issues: and these have served to alienate many of those who would probably otherwise have accepted the need to eradicate discrimination. On occasion too much froth has been generated on this subject. Often it has happened from the best of motives, but the net result has been a gross disservice to the basic cause.

Attitudes of this kind do not, surely, progress the cause of lesbian and gay rights. By raising antagonism they in fact impede progress. At local and national level we ought to be concentrating our efforts on real, practical steps towards equality: in housing and social services provision, for instance. By overloading the practical with the purely rhetorical we put the whole endeavour at risk.

We must concentrate on bringing people *with* us in our progressive ideals, not on alienating them. We must listen, not cajole; reason, not hector; and possibly at times take things step by step rather than running the whole distance all at once and finding no one has followed us there.

This will only be achieved if we demonstrate clearly to ordinary people of all classes and walks of life that a commitment to a cause like lesbian and gay rights is not something separate, distinct, 'out there' and divorced from any concern of theirs. Instead we must show that it is part-and-parcel of an overall battle against inequality and injustice that includes *them*, too. Our determination to fight the disparities and indeed the oppression that are caused by differences of gender or race or sexuality springs from the same root as our commitment to fight the class disadvantages that still scar British society.

If people are given the impression that we want to worry about lesbian and gay rights *instead* of their own problems and anxieties, then of course they will react in a hostile manner. But it is far from the truth, and we have to let them know by our words and deeds that the message is the same for all people, however and in whatever way they are suffering. □



A Tactical Vote

THE HARD ISSUES 2: DEFENCE

Is she serious?

MARY KALDOR ***argues that political and economic calculations speak for Labour's defence posture***

IT IS NOT at all clear that Mrs Thatcher's attack on Labour's defence policy will work. The Tories are vulnerable on two important aspects of defence policy. One is the 'zero option' and its implications for NATO's nuclear strategy. The other is the cut in the defence budget and the fact that Britain cannot afford its current military commitments.

The Conservative Party grudgingly accepted the 'double zero option' at the outset of the campaign — though hedged around with conditions that may be difficult for the Soviet Union to accept. The 'double zero option' is the proposal to eliminate all intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe (cruise, Pershing II and SS-20) *and* shorter-range missiles, with a range of 500-100km. Meanwhile, the Tories emphasise the short-range missile gap and NATO leaders are arguing for new nuclear weapons to compensate for the removal of cruise and Pershing II missiles. It is worth the number-crunching to spell out *just how the Tories are deliberately misleading the public and how deep is their commitment to retain and even increase nuclear weapons whatever the Soviet Union does.*

In the Defence White Paper, published last month, the government made great play of the fact that the Soviet Union had a 9:1 superiority in shorter-range missiles and an 8:1 superiority in short-range missiles as well as superiority in chemical and conventional fields. As defined by Reagan and Gorbachev, shorter-range missiles are missiles in the range 500-1000km. What Mrs Thatcher has done is to include all weapons with a range of over 150km as shorter-range missiles. She has talked about a 9:1 superiority in missiles which 'can hit Britain'. What she means is missiles which can hit Britain *during a Soviet advance* across West Germany and the low countries — *not* from the Soviet Union. And then to confuse the voter further, the Tories count launchers rather than

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weapons — although they count warheads in the long-range category where the Soviet superiority disappears if one counts launchers. If one counts weapons rather than launchers, in the category 500-1000km, it is possible to arrive at a NATO *superiority* in Europe of 12 missiles.

Mrs Thatcher agreed, last month, to accept the double zero option provided it included Soviet missiles in Asia and that America Pershing 1A missiles, currently under West German control, are not included. It was handsome of her. Essentially, she was offering to accept a unilateral reduction of all Soviet shorter-range missiles. Meanwhile, West Germany gets to keep its Pershing 1As.

Absurdities

The 8:1 superiority in short-range missiles is reached by counting missile launchers, not weapons and by leaving out French missiles. In fact, the American Lance missile has a much greater reload capability than the Soviet Frogs and Scuds. Moreover, many of the Soviet rockets are dual-capable — they can carry nuclear or non-nuclear warheads, and no one knows whether they are actually equipped with nuclear warheads. These are the same rockets that are used to explain the chemical threat to Western Europe and they cannot have both chemical and nuclear warheads at once.

Again, if we count weapons rather than launchers, it is possible to reduce the Soviet advantage in Europe (assuming all Frogs are nuclear) to a maximum of 2:1. The point of doing this kind of exercise is not to argue that the Soviet Union does or does not have more nuclear weapons. Rather, it is to show how silly these calculations are. If you choose your category right, it is always possible to identify an imbalance on one side or the other.

In the past, NATO has never bothered to match Soviet short-range rockets which are considered inaccurate and obsolete (most of the rockets are over 20 years old). NATO was always thought to have a superiority in nuclear artillery, although in recent years the Soviet Union has been modernising its artillery and several of the newer types are said to be nuclear-capable. NATO also has a superiority in nuclear-capable tactical aircraft. In 1983, the Soviet Union insisted that tactical aircraft be included in the package on medium-range missiles because it was thought that Western superiority in tactical aircraft offset Soviet superiority in land-based missiles. An important concession by Gorbachev is that he no longer talks about the 'tactical aircraft gap'.

The absurdity of picking out one category of weapons is apparent if we look at the overall totals of nuclear warheads. NATO has some 5,000 US nuclear warheads stored in Europe plus over 2,000 outside Europe, committed to Europe. (This does not include British and French nuclear weapons.) US nuclear weapons, in addition to land-based missiles, consist of bombs aboard aircraft, sea-launched missiles aboard Poseidon, artillery and atomic demolition mines. No one knows the size of the Soviet stockpile for Europe — perhaps as many weapons again, perhaps fewer, perhaps more. It is quite possible that the Russians themselves have not counted their stockpile.

It is thought, however, that very few warheads are actually stockpiled in Central Europe: it would take time to equip the weapons and it could not be done by surprise. When one considers that the accident at Chernobyl was equivalent to a *very* small nuclear weapon, the madness of these numerical comparisons must be obvious. Who cares whether we are killed by an up-to-date howitzer, an old and inaccurate unguided rocket, or a free fall bomb from a tactical aircraft?

So why the fuss about the short-range missile gap? The reason is that the Tory party is not at all happy about the zero option — even though the Reagan Administration clearly wants an arms control agreement and Mrs Thatcher herself has been playing the role of peacemaker, with her radiant visit to Moscow. For the removal of cruise and Pershing will reopen the debate about flexible response strategy and the US-European relationship. *We* may not care whether we are killed by an unguided rocket or a free fall bomb but NATO's political and military leaders do. Flexible response was designed to make credible an inherently non-credible situation, namely that the US would use nuclear weapons in defence of Western Europe, and so, in the words of Henry Kissinger, 'risk Chicago for Dusseldorf'.

Flexible response offers a discrete package of nuclear weapons to demonstrate NATO's readiness without provoking Soviet retaliation against US territory. Cruise and Pershing are supposed to be ideal for this purpose because they can be used, as a NATO official assured me recently, in an 'extremely restrained' way against Warsaw Pact territory. In contrast, short-range weapons would have to be used on NATO territory, aircraft are vulnerable, and sea-based weapons might be mistaken for part of the US strategic arsenal.

Embarrassing questions

NATO leaders are now arguing strongly for new nuclear weapons to compensate for the removal of cruise and Pershing missiles. The prime candidates are air-launched cruise missiles, which would probably be flown from aircraft based in Britain; a sea-launched version of Tomahawk (the Greenham Common-based cruise missile); and a new missile to replace Lance. On *Panorama*, and again on *Weekend World* last Sunday, George Younger, the Defence Secretary, sheepishly refused to rule out the possibility that a new generation of US nuclear weapons would replace the ground-launched nuclear missiles. And an article in the *Washington Post* (16 May) suggested the US was keeping quiet about this option before the election.

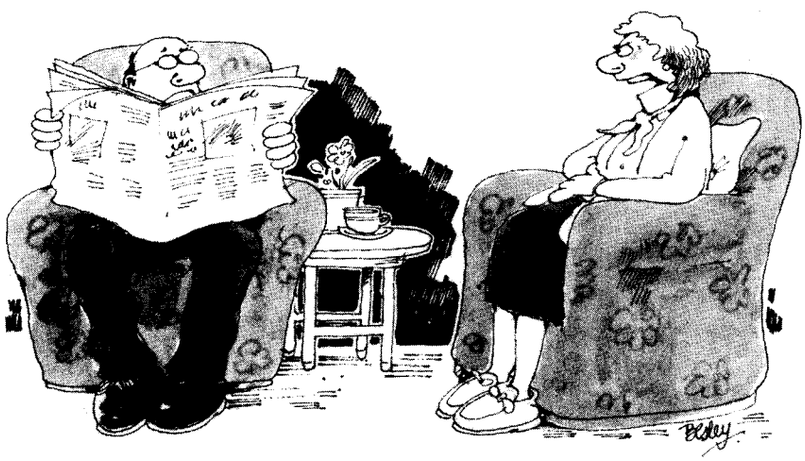
But is this realistic? A new round of nuclear weapons modernisation could provoke a new public outcry and lead to a deterioration in East-West relations. Given the tight budgetary situation, the Democrats in Congress are very unlikely to approve funds for new nuclear weapons in Europe, even as the price for a zero option.

The obvious alternative is a change in NATO strategy. After all, NATO's strategy of massive retaliation lasted 13 years, and flexible response has lasted 20 years. Is it not time for a change? A non-provocative conventional strategy allows for an improvement in East-West relations and does not require numerical equality in conventional forces on either side. That this is now a serious option is suggested by the fact that the government saw fit to mention it in the Defence White Paper, even though it argued that it would not provide sufficient security.

Cost is the second factor. The defence budget is scheduled to fall this year in real terms and to level out in 1989-90. The Tories have actually admitted, for the first time, that defence research and development is bad for the civilian economy. Savings will be achieved through slowing down major equipment purchases and through cutting down on 'readiness' — ammunition, fuel and RAF flying hours. This cannot be sustained in the long run. Ministry of Defence sources say that, on present projections, the current commitment will cost £8 billion more than has been allocated.

Mrs Thatcher hopes to get through the election without the following embarrassing questions being asked:

Is she serious about the zero option? And if she is, why is she misleading the public about the short-range missile gap? Does she really welcome Gorbachev's 'new thinking' or is she willing to undermine his position by torpedoing the zero option or by nullifying its effects through bringing new nuclear weapons to Europe? Does she prefer the arms race to a process of liberalisation in the Soviet Union? And can she afford the arms race? Is not nuclear disarmament, now, a sensible political and *economic option?* □



'I said I've just made a keynote speech to you'

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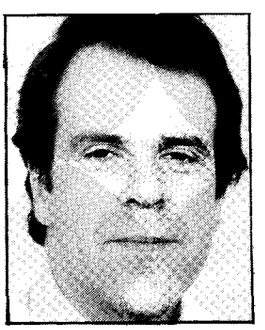
Reader survey

This is the first time we have asked our readers about themselves and their views of the magazine for two years, and the first time since I became editor. There are four reasons for doing it.

The first is pretty obvious — that it's only by knowing what kind of people make up our readership that we can hope to develop the magazine into one you will find stimulating. On top of that, we want to gauge your reactions to particular parts of the magazine by getting you to answer a few direct questions about its content. Third, we need to know how well we're doing in keeping you satisfied — how many new readers we have, and how many long established ones, for example. And finally, we need to know who reads the Statesman in order to be able to tell potential advertisers about the audience they reach through the magazine. We need revenue from advertising to allow improvements to the magazine without the readers having to bear the whole cost through increased cover price.

I hope for all these reasons that you will be able to spare the time to complete this questionnaire. If you live in the UK you don't need a stamp to return it to us and, filling in forms not being everyone's favourite pastime, we're trying to encourage you by sending a case of wine to the authors of the first four completed questionnaires drawn from responses received by the end of June.

John Lloyd
Editor



How often do you read *New Statesman*? (1)
- *At least 3 in every 4 weeks* ☐ 1
- *Every other week or so* ☐ 2
- *About once a month* ☐ 3
- *Less often* ☐ 4

How did you get this copy of the *New Statesman*? (2)
- *By subscription through the post* ☐ 1
- *On firm order from your newsagent* ☐ 2
- *From a newsagent, but not on firm order* ☐ 3
- *From a library* ☐ 4
- *It is an office copy* ☐ 5
- *It is someone else's copy* ☐ 6

When did you first start reading the *New Statesman*? (3)
- *Less than a year ago* ☐ 1
- *1-2 years ago* ☐ 2
- *3-5 years ago* ☐ 3
- *6-9 years ago* ☐ 4
- *10-20 years ago* ☐ 5
- *More than 20 years ago* ☐ 6

How old are you? (4)
- *15-24* ☐ 1
- *25-34* ☐ 2
- *35-44* ☐ 3
- *45-54* ☐ 4
- *55-64* ☐ 5
- *65+* ☐ 6

What sex are you? (5)
- *Female* ☐ 1
- *Male* ☐ 2

Are you: (6)
- *Single* ☐ 1
- *Married/living with a partner* ☐ 2

Do you have any children under the age of 18? (7)
- *No* ☐ 1
- *Yes — one or two* ☐ 2
- *more than two* ☐ 3

Which of the following are you? (8)
- *House/flat owner* ☐ 1
- *Council tenant* ☐ 2
- *Private tenant* ☐ 3
- *Housing Association tenant* ☐ 4
- *In short-life housing* ☐ 5
- *Other* ☐ 6

Are you: (9)
- *In paid employment* ☐ 1
- *Self-employed* ☐ 2
- *Unemployed* ☐ 3
- *On a Government Training Scheme* ☐ 4
- *Housewife/househusband* ☐ 5
- *Independent* ☐ 6
- *Student* ☐ 7
- *Retired* ☐ 8

If you are in employment or self-employed, please describe what you do in a way we'll understand (not just a job title) (10)

.....

.....

In which sector do you work? (11)
- *Private* ☐ 1
- *Public* ☐ 2

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If public, which of the following?

- *Education* ☐1 (12)
- *Local Government* ☐2
- *Health* ☐3
- *Social Services* ☐4
- *Community Work* ☐5
- *Other (please specify)* ☐6

.....

If private, which of the following?

- *Advertising* ☐1 (13)
- *Journalism* ☐2
- *Computing* ☐3
- *A profession (e.g. Law, Accountancy) state which —* ☐4

.....

- *Banking/investment* ☐5
- *Other (please specify)* ☐6

.....

What is your gross annual income?

- *Less than £5,000* ☐1 (14)
- *£5,001-£7,000* ☐2
- *£7,001-£10,000* ☐3
- *£10,001-£12,000* ☐4
- *£12,001-15,000* ☐5
- *£15,001-£20,000* ☐6
- *More than £20,000* ☐7

Do you have any of the following credit cards?

- *American Express* ☐1 (15)
- *Diners Club* ☐2
- *Visa* ☐3
- *Access* ☐4
- *Store cards (i.e. Marks & Spencer etc.)* ☐5
- *Other (please state)* ☐6

.....

- *None* ☐7

Do you have any of the following?

	Acquired in last two years	Acquired more than two years ago
Stocks & Shares	☐1 (16)	☐1 (17)
Unit Trusts	☐2	☐2
Life assurance policy	☐3	☐3
Building society account	☐4	☐4
Bank current account	☐5	☐5
Bank deposit account	☐6	☐6
Cheque book	☐7	☐7

At what age did you, or do you expect to, complete your full-time education?

- *15 and under* ☐1 (18)
- *16-18* ☐2
- *19 and over* ☐3

Which is your highest educational qualification?

- *GCE 'O' level or equivalent* ☐1 (19)
- *GCE 'A' level or equivalent* ☐2
- *HNC/HND* ☐3
- *Degree: BA/BSc/BEd* ☐4
- *MA/MSc* ☐5
- *Doctorate* ☐6

If you hold public office, such as MP, JP, school governor, trade union post, please say which:

.....

Are you a member of:

- *A professional body* ☐1 (20)
- *Trade Union* ☐2
- *Neither* ☐3

Are you a member of any of the following, and in a general election for which would you vote (discounting tactical voting):

	Member	*Voter*
Labour Party	☐1 (21)	☐1 (22)
Liberal Party	☐2	☐2
SDP	☐3	☐3
Conservative	☐4	☐4
Other (please specify)	☐5	☐5
	.....	
None/undecided	☐6	☐6

On average, which of the following dailies do you read regularly?

- *The Times* ☐1 (23)
- *Guardian* ☐2
- *The Independent* ☐3
- *Daily Telegraph* ☐4
- *Financial Times* ☐5
- *Daily Mirror* ☐6
- *London Standard* ☐7
- *London Daily News* ☐8
- *Other (please specify)* ☐9

.....

- *None* ☐10

On average, which Sunday papers do you read regularly?

- *Observer* ☐1 (24)
- *Sunday Times* ☐2
- *Sunday Telegraph* ☐3
- *Sunday Mirror* ☐4
- *News on Sunday* ☐5
- *Other (please specify)* ☐6

.....

- *None* ☐7

On average, which of the following magazines do you read often?

	(25)		(26)
City Limits	☐1	*The Economist*	☐1
Punch	☐2	*The Listener*	☐2
Marxism Today	☐3	*Times Educational Supplement*	☐3
Times Literary Supplement	☐4	*New Socialist*	☐4
Time Out	☐5	*New Scientist*	☐5
Private Eye	☐6	*Business Magazine*	☐6
New Society	☐7	*Spectator*	☐7
Spare Rib	☐8	*A La Carte*	☐8
Q	☐9	*Arena*	☐9

On how many days a week would you say you watched television nowadays?

- *7 days* ☐1 (27)
- *6 days* ☐2
- *5 days* ☐3
- *3 or 4 days* ☐4
- *1 or 2 days* ☐5
- *Less often* ☐6
- *Never* ☐7

On a day when you watch television, for about how many hours do you view on average?

- *½ hour or less* ☐1 (28)
- *About 1 hour* ☐2
- *About 2 hours* ☐3
- *About 3 hours* ☐4
- *About 4 hours* ☐5
- *About 5 hours* ☐6
- *About 6 hours* ☐7
- *About 7 hours* ☐8
- *About 8 hours* ☐9
- *9 hours or more* ☐10

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Out of every ten hours that you watch television, how many hours would you say that you watched the following channels?

	None	½ hour or less	about 1 hr	2 hrs	3 hrs	4 hrs	5 hrs	6 hrs	7 hrs	8 hrs	9 hrs+	
BBC1	☐ 11	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	☐ 8	☐ 9	☐ 10	(29)
BBC2	☐ 11	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	☐ 8	☐ 9	☐ 10	(30)
ITV	☐ 11	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	☐ 8	☐ 9	☐ 10	(31)
Channel 4	☐ 11	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7	☐ 8	☐ 9	☐ 10	(32)

Which of the following do you enjoy watching? (Please rank in order of preference)

Soap opera	☐ 1	(33)
Drama	☐ 2	
Documentary	☐ 3	
News & current affairs	☐ 4	
Sport	☐ 5	
Arts	☐ 6	
Music	☐ 7	
Films	☐ 8	
Chat Shows	☐ 9	

About how many books, for work or leisure, have you bought over the past six months?

	Hardback		Paperback	
None	☐ 1	(34)	☐ 1	(35)
1-5	☐ 2		☐ 2	
6-10	☐ 3		☐ 3	
11-20	☐ 4		☐ 4	
More than 20	☐ 5		☐ 5	

Which types of books do you mainly read?

History	☐ 1	(36)
Biography/autobiography	☐ 2	
Politics/current affairs	☐ 3	
Cultural	☐ 4	
Other non-fiction	☐ 5	
Fiction	☐ 6	

Are you influenced in your choice of books by reviews in the *New Statesman*?

Yes	☐ 1	(37)
No	☐ 2	

On average, how often do you:

	More than twice a month	Once or twice a month	At least 6 times a year	Less than 6 times a year	Never	
Visit a cinema	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(38)
Go to the theatre	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(39)
Listen to live classical music	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(40)
Listen to live non-classical music	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(41)
Visit an art gallery	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(42)
Attend a political demonstration/meeting	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(43)

On average, how many of the following do you buy a month?

	More than four	Three or four	One or two	Less than one	None	
LP records	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(44)
Cassettes	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(45)
Compact discs	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(46)
Video cassettes	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(47)

Do you have in your home any of the following?

A television	☐ 1	(48)
A video cassette recorder	☐ 2	
A stereo	☐ 3	
A tape cassette player	☐ 4	
A home computer	☐ 5	
A camera	☐ 6	
A compact disc player	☐ 7	

How many of the following do you have in your household?

	None	One	Two	More than two	
Car	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(49)
Motor bike	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(50)
Push bike	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	(51)

If you have principal use of a car yourself, what model is it?

.....

How many holidays have you taken in the last 12 months?

Three or more	☐ 1	(52)
Two	☐ 2	
One	☐ 3	
None	☐ 4	

Were these holidays abroad or in Britain?

Both abroad and in Britain	☐ 1	(53)
Abroad	☐ 2	
Britain	☐ 3	

Were these holidays abroad in Europe or out of Europe?

In Europe	☐ 1	(54)
Out of Europe (please state Continent)	☐ 2	

..... (55)

Were any of these holidays:

Packages	☐ 1	(56)
Special interest	☐ 2	
In 'time share' accommodation	☐ 3	
None of these	☐ 4	

How many times have you travelled abroad on business in the last 12 months?

Three times or more	☐ 1	(57)
Twice	☐ 2	
Once	☐ 3	
None	☐ 4	

What was the principal mode of transport you used?

	On last holiday		Last overseas business trip	
Car	☐ 1	(58)	☐ 1	(59)
Coach	☐ 2		☐ 2	
Train	☐ 3		☐ 3	
Aeroplane	☐ 4		☐ 4	

How often do you:

	More than once a week	About once a week	Less than once a week but at least once a month	Less than once a month	Never	
Consume wine	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(60)
Consume spirits	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(61)
Consume beer	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(62)
Smoke cigarettes	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(63)
cigars	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(64)
a pipe	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(65)
Eat out in a restaurant	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(66)

Please show what you think of each of the following parts of the contents of the *New Statesman* by ticking the appropriate box:

	Always worth reading	Usually worth reading	Sometimes worth reading	Not usually worth reading	Never read	
Editorials	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(67)
Cover Stories	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(68)
Peter Kellner's column	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(69)
Duncan Campbell's stories	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(70)
Economics column	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(71)
Media column	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(72)
Essays	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(73)
Book reviews	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(74)
Arts reviews	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(75)
'Backchat' pages	☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	(76)

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Please write here any other comments or criticisms of the *New Statesman* you might have:

Which features or articles have you enjoyed most in the last year?

Would you be willing to take part in further research into *New Statesman* readership?

Yes ☐ **No** ☐

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....**Postcode**.....

You do not have to give us your name and address, but it helps in analysing responses. All details supplied will be kept strictly confidential.

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2

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The cowboy in the saloon

R. W. JOHNSON ***on the crippling legacy Ronald Reagan will bequeath his successor***

PRESIDENT REAGAN — for all his well-advertised dislike of detente — finds himself facing today much the same situation which led President Nixon towards detente in the early 1970s. The real rationale for detente, it is too often forgotten, lay in the fact that America had simply bitten off far more than it could chew. At a point when American economic power was being ever more fiercely challenged by Japan and the EEC, the US was still attempting to confront both Communist China and the USSR.

Simultaneously, the US had got itself backed into supporting an Israeli stance so extreme as to have united the whole Middle East, even the moderate President Sadat of Egypt, against it — and all this while bogged down in an endless war in Vietnam. It was far too much — and Kissinger's policy consisted, in effect, of cutting losses and minimising costs wherever he could. Throughout the Third World local responsibilities were to be devolved to regional super-powers (Iran, South Africa, Pakistan etc); the Vietnam war had to be ended; the Israelis had had to have their arms twisted into making realistic concessions to Egypt; Red China had to be recognised and Taiwan told to like it or lump it; the USSR had to be recognised as a nuclear equal and given the arms control agreements it craved; the Japanese challenge had to be repelled with the 'Nixon shock' of an overall 10 per cent tariff on Japanese goods; and the Europeans had to allow their currencies to float up to a more realistic level against the dollar by dint of US departure from the gold standard and the abolition of fixed exchange rates. However it was sold, what detente amounted to for America was retrenchment all round.

Jimmy Carter, initially at least, took the logic of this policy one step further. America's key relationships, he argued, lay not in the old polarity with the USSR but with OPEC, Japan, the EEC, the newly industrialising countries (the NICs) and the Third World. This, rather than the sterility of the Cold War, was what US foreign policy had to be about. Unfortunately for Carter, the Kissinger policies had a time-fuse. Even Kissinger's time had seen the break-up of Pakistan and radical regimes installed in Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, and Indochina; but this was followed, in the Carter period, by further radical gains in Zimbabwe, Nicaragua, Iran and Afghanistan — the latter culminating, fatally, in Soviet intervention. The uneasy feeling grew that America was 'losing turf' and, ineluctably, this helped resurrect all the old Cold War bug-bears.

Ronald Reagan capitalised happily on this mood in 1980, sweeping Carter out of office on a promise of making America 'walk tall' again, of standing up hard to the Soviets, of rejecting out of hand the 'philosophy of weakness' which underlaid detente.

> ***'By concentrating on its traditional rivalry with Russia, the US has made it easy for its real competitor, Japan, to come through the middle. Japanese GNP per capita has surpassed that of the US and Japan is now the world's biggest creditor'***

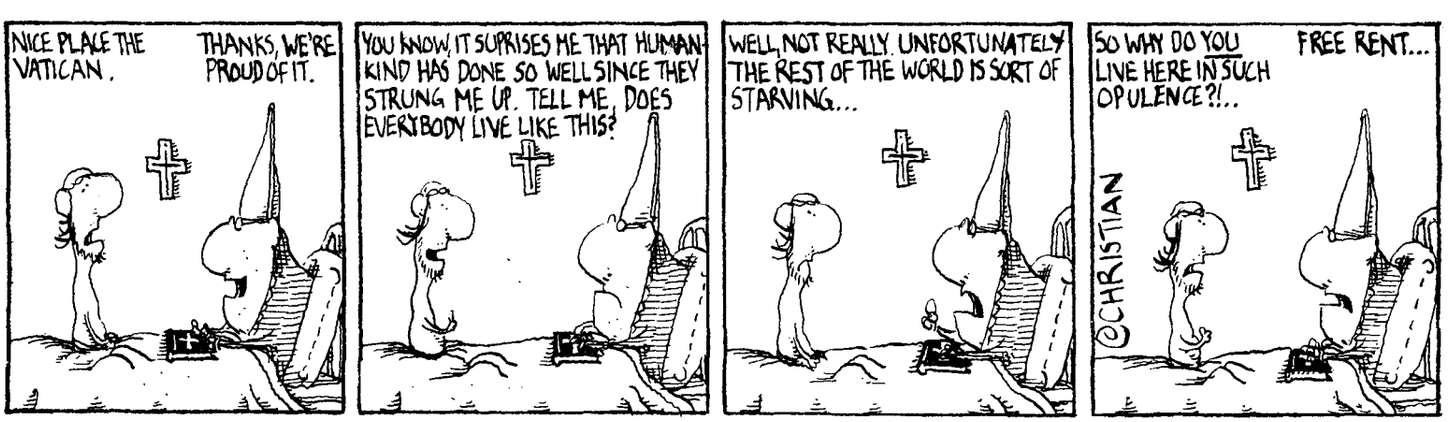
Walking on tall debt

The Reagan revolution was rooted in a simple-minded voluntarism. The factors which had led to retrenchment before were not so much denied as ignored. America would have a 600-ship Navy, would have B-1, and MX, a Star Wars programme, would resume the role of world policeman, *simply because it wanted to*. In the last analysis, it was argued, America could win the contest with the Soviets by simply outspending them, forcing the pace in the arms race to a point where the USSR could not follow except at the risk of domestic economic collapse. Simultaneously, tax cuts and a supply-side revolution would revive America's economy so that this vast new defence build-up could be painlessly afforded.

The result was quite predictable. Tax cuts on the one hand and the defence spree on the other simply produced a runaway budget deficit. Simultaneously, the consumer boom thus unleashed, together with the strong dollar ('walking tall' in the money markets), led to a runaway trade deficit. After six years of Reagan America has by far the strongest military establishment in the world — and is the world's biggest debtor. US imports are now running at almost twice the level of exports, the dollar is in free fall and the US is set to become the world's first trillion-dollar debtor in the early 1990s. (In fact the situation is worse than this, for many of America's foreign 'assets' are quite uncollectable loans to the Third World.) The international payoff for this huge accretion of military strength has been minimal. Grenada has been invaded, Gadafy has been given a bloody nose and the Nicaraguans harassed (though both Gadafy and the Sandinistas remain in power). The Russians have not responded by spending themselves into economic collapse — indeed, the main victim of the defence build-up has been the US, not the Soviet economy.

The true international price of all this is now clear. By concentrating on its traditional rivalry with Russia, the US has simply made it easy for its real competitor, Japan, to come through the middle. Japanese GNP per capita now surpasses that of the US; the Tokyo stock market is bigger than Wall Street; and Japan has taken over America's role as the world's biggest creditor. Indeed, it has taken the US only a few years to move from worrying about the rate that Japanese investors were buying up American assets to worrying about the appalling consequences if they stop.

It is important to realise that there is not now very much the US can do about this. As a glance at the *Business Week* ranking of the top 1,000 US companies will show, the Reagan shakeout has left much of US heavy industry in the same crippled state that the comparable Thatcher period has left British industry. General Motors, once the perennial number one, now comes sixth. US Steel


NICE PLACE THE VATICAN.
THANKS, WE'RE PROUD OF IT.
YOU KNOW, IT SUPRISES ME THAT HUMAN-KIND HAS DONE SO WELL SINCE THEY STRUNG ME UP. TELL ME, DOES EVERYBODY LIVE LIKE THIS?
WELL, NOT REALLY. UNFORTUNATELY THE REST OF THE WORLD IS SORT OF STARVING...
SO WHY DO YOU LIVE HERE IN SUCH OPULENCE?!..
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(now USX), until recently always in the top ten, now comes 77th, easily surpassed by such companies as Sears, Roebuck (14th), McDonald's (43rd), Pepsi Cola (47th) or even Walt Disney (63rd). (Chrysler, despite its much vaunted recovery, still comes only 64th.) And despite all the propaganda about service industries, few nations would willingly swap the No. 1 position in steel or automobile production for becoming world leaders in mail order, fast food, soft drinks and cartoons.

But it is far easier to destroy such industrial sinew than it is to rebuild it: quite certainly, the trend will not be reversed. Moreover, the real motor of Japanese economic strength has always been Japan's high savings ratio, while the US has one of the world's lowest savings ratios. The only sign of these ratios changing is that the American figure continues to fall. The consequences, though awesome, are obvious. The US imposition of tariffs on Japanese semi-conductors is no more likely to halt this tide than the famous Nixon shock did.

Number one nation

The US has, typically, attempted until now to resolve its problem with Japan through the prism of the Cold War, exhorting Japan to take on a greater defence role versus the USSR. The thought, quite transparently, was that apart from giving the Russians more to worry about, the Japanese would use up some of their enormous surpluses in buying large amounts of US military hardware, thus easing the trade problem at the same time. This now seems unlikely to happen. Japan is now pondering its choice of the next generation of jet fighter and, to the anguished indignation of the US, has declared that neither the F15, F16 or F18 is technically advanced enough. The current indications are that Japan will choose to build such a plane itself, thus moving into the front rank of the world aerospace industry.

Similarly, Japan has been quietly moving ahead with its own space programme. It has now launched 36 of its own spacecraft and its H-2 rocket is expected, by 1992, to be at least comparable with anything the US or Europe has to offer. Entirely typically, the Reagan Star Wars programme is focused on beating the Russians in space — but, given past experience in other fields, it is difficult not to see Japan as the number one nation in space by the early 21st century.

Future historians will no doubt react with wonderment to the phenomenon of Reagan's foreign policy. The absurdity of the present crab-like American progress towards an arms control deal with the Soviets is thus not just that Gorbachev is offering deal after deal (even offering to surrender nuclear parity for a 'reasonable sufficiency') that previous US administrations would have snatched at, but that the US is still concentrating on the wrong race. At this rate the Reagan Administration will be able to boast that it won a great victory in Grenada, gave Gadafy some well-deserved kicks, kept the Nicaraguans worried half to death, left the US with a military establishment far too costly to maintain — while losing American economic and technological primacy for good. The cowboy in the saloon has been winning popularity by offering drinks on the house all round and using up his bullets by taking pot-shots at easy targets — while outside Geronimo awaits, stronger by the hour. □

PERMANENT GOVERNMENT

Labour and the desiccated calculating machines

Peter Hennessy

THE NASTIEST remark about manifestos was coined by a famous temporary civil servant, Lord Rothschild, in 1976, less than two years after his departure from the Central Policy Review Staff (better known as the Think Tank) when he decried 'the promises and panaceas which gleam like false teeth' in them. The Whitehall regulars he left behind cannot allow such disdain to infect the briefs they are now preparing for the kaleidoscopic range of governments the electorate could in theory produce.

> ***Lord Bancroft, a former head of the Home Civil Service, once explained that if officials had a personal, partisan political commitment "they would kill themselves". His maxim was "conviction politicians, certainly: conviction civil servants, no".***

For when it comes to processing the contents of manifestos the professional ethic of the career civil servant obliges him or her to imitate Nye Bevan's celebrated dessicated calculating machine. Lord Bancroft, a former Head of the Home Civil Service who worked as private secretary to three Chancellors of the Exchequer — Butler, Maudling and Callaghan — once explained that if officials had a personal, partisan, political commitment 'they would kill themselves'. His maxim was 'conviction politicians, certainly: conviction civil servants, no'.

A tinge of personal concern, if not passion, does enter into Whitehall's manifesto reading, however, if matters close to departmental hearts are directly affected. Labour's *Britain will win* has a clutch of items which fall into this category, though they are sprinkled messily throughout its text rather than placed in a specific Whitehall section. In its tidy way, the Cabinet Office will probably by now have placed them in a neat box with the following contents:

A strengthened Department of Trade and Industry.
Cabinet Minister for Women.
New Ministry of Environmental Protection.
New Ministry of Science and Technology.
New Ministry for the Arts and Media.
Repeal of section 2 of the Official Secrets Act.
New Freedom of Information Act.
Parliamentary scrutiny of the security services.
Restoration of trade union rights at GCHQ.

No surprises there, though the briefs waiting for Labour ministers will probably urge caution on freedom of information (why not by a code of practice on open government monitored by a select committee as a first step?) and parliamentary oversight of MI5 and MI6 (keep it to a small committee of privy counsellors who have served in at least one security-sensitive ministry).

More of a surprise is what's missing. The Labour movement, particularly its Fabian Society branch, has done a great deal of work, for example, on the problems created for a radically minded incoming government by Lord Bancroft's conviction-free zone in Whitehall. In the spring of 1982 a Fabian team consisting of former special advisers from the Wilson and Callaghan years, former civil servants and a senior official then still in post, produced a top-flight report on exactly this theme, *Making government work**. This April the Fabians had another shot with *Labour's First Hundred Days*† which included a chapter on 'Labour and the Civil Service' by David Lipsey, author of the previous pamphlet. Another section, 'Advice at the Centre', was penned by Tessa Blackstone (ex-Think Tank) who was Neil Kinnock's ear on the organisation of No 10 and the Cabinet Office.

His plans for Cabinet government, a revived Think Tank to help revive it, an enhanced Prime Minister's Office to help himself and individual French-style *cabinets* to help his ministers as outlined last year for Brook Production's Channel 4 programme, *All the Prime Minister's Men*, had a distinctly Blackstonish tinge to them. But there is no whisper of them in the manifesto. This is a mistake. Mr Kinnock should have taken a lesson from a non-obvious source — Mr Edward Heath, inventor of the Central Policy Review Staff.

Heath's plan for a Think Tank was made plain in the Conservatives' 1970 manifesto, a 'central capability unit', they called it. Heath had quite a tussle with the permanent secretaries in establishing it. (One minor battle ensued when he wanted to call it the Think Tank but the Cabinet Secretary said it wouldn't look right on the front of a White Paper and the Cabinet Secretary won.) A specific manifesto pledge, in this instance, would not have been a 'gleaming false tooth' Mr Kinnock came to regret but a valuable weapon for use in a classic Whitehall turf-fight. □

*David Lipsey (ed), *Making government work*, Fabian Tract 480, £1.50.
†Ben Pimlott (ed), *Labour's First Hundred Days*, Fabian Society No 519, £2.

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ARTS

As lusted after by Queen Victoria: Lady Butler's 'The Roll-Call' (1874)

ART

Recorder of collective murder

John Spurling

Lady Butler: Battle Artist
National Army Museum, London, until 26 September; then Durham and Leeds

LADY BUTLER, or Elizabeth Thompson as she was known in the days of her greatest success, has been almost forgotten. Yet when, at the age of 27, she showed her painting 'The Roll-Call' in the 1874 Royal Academy exhibition, it was so mobbed by the public that a policeman had to be posted beside it.

Many — including the Prince of Wales — wanted to buy it, but it was already sold to a Mr Galloway of Manchester and he wouldn't let it go at any price. It was taken by night to Buckingham Palace for Queen Victoria to inspect. She too wanted to buy it and very reluctantly Mr Galloway gave in, but only on condition that the Queen signed six copies of the engraving and that he should have the artist's next RA painting at the same price. He got a battle-scene this time, 'The 28th Regiment at Quatre Bras', of which Ruskin wrote:

> I never approached a picture with more iniquitous prejudice against it then I did Miss Thompson's; partly because I have always said that no woman could paint; and secondly, because I thought what the public made such a fuss about must be good for nothing. But it is amazon's work this, no doubt about it . . .

Meanwhile, lying in hospital recovering from fever after his return from the First Ashanti War of 1873, the heavily whiskered Major Butler — soldier, adventurer and travel writer — read the reports in the papers of the phenomenal success of 'The Roll-Call' and remarked jokingly to his sister, 'I wonder if Miss Thompson would marry me?' Three years later she did. The Major went on to take part in most of the Victorian Empire's campaigns in Africa and rose to the rank of General. Elizabeth Thompson continued to paint mainly military pictures, missed becoming the first woman ARA by two votes (43 years before Annie Swynnerton succeeded in 1922), lost her first child but had five more and gradually fell out of favour with the public. She outlived her husband by 23 years and died in an Irish castle in 1933.

It's a romantic story in more ways than one, for both these pillars of Victorian society were also outsiders: Roman Catholics, humanitarians and protesters against the excesses of late Victorian aggrandisement. Butler, born and brought up in Ireland, instinctively sided with Irish peasants, West African negroes, Egyptian *fellaheen* and Boer farmers and remarked that the expedition to rescue Gordon from Khartoum (for which Butler organised the boats up the Nile) was 'the very first war during the Victorian Era in which the object was entirely noble and worthy'. Elizabeth Thompson, brought up abroad with her younger sister, the poet Alice Meynell, seldom depicted officers or glorious victories but most often ordinary soldiers in the thick of a desperate defence or immediately afterwards.

'The Roll-Call' consists of a line of Guardsmen, fresh from a Crimean battle and still shattered by the experience, standing in the snow (one has just fallen forward dead), while their sergeant calls out the names and a sinister arc of crows against the yellow clouds behind them suggests what they have just left. There is an officer on a horse, riding along the line from the left, but he is curiously unnoticeable, supplying the same necessary front-plane vertical as a tree in a Claude or Turner landscape, gently directing the eye inwards to the sergeant and from him along the line of carefully individualised faces and poses. The painting is a classic piece of naturalism, comparable in its emotional restraint as well as its steady documentation of physical and psychological pain to Luke Fildes' 'Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward', which also scored a great success at the same exhibition. Many people at the time believed that Elizabeth Thompson must have been a hospital nurse, but the truth is stranger. She had been drawing soldiers since childhood and she had studied military paintings by French artists such as Meissonier, de Neuville and Detaille, but her work was based entirely on a combination of sympathetic imagination and extreme attention to detail. To capture the reality of the battle at Quatre Bras, she bought a field of rye near Henley and with her mother and some local children trampled it down; at Chatham Barracks she was given a full-scale demonstration (in specially made uniforms of the period) of the old British battle-square; in the riding-school at Knightsbridge the Royal Horse Guards rode horses at her and made one of them roll over in the sawdust.

This outstandingly thorough and well-organised exhibition (with a first-rate catalogue by Paul Usherwood and Jenny Spencer-Smith)

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includes much of her life's work, as well as works by other French and British military artists of the time, and demonstrates her weaknesses as well as her strengths. After her first successes — including a fine version of the aftermath of the Charge of the Light Brigade, a painting of the lone survivor of the First Afghan War and, somewhat later, the cavalry charge of the Scots Greys at Waterloo, 'Scotland for Ever', which was almost her only painting of attack rather than defence or recuperation — she never really developed. Her subject matter, her thematic content (the heroism of suffering and endurance) and her formal devices all become somewhat repetitive, though there are occasional surprises such as the painting of an Irish eviction and 'The Dawn of Waterloo', a powerful image of two mounted trumpeters riding in amongst the sleeping ranks of Scots Greys troopers. But, if she was not finally a major artist, she deserves to be better remembered. Not as a sexual phenomenon of the kind Ruskin patronisingly saluted (she was no amazon), but as the true recorder of a recurrent human activity — collective murder — which we contrive to forget about or idealise in peacetime, but which has always been and still is an important element in our history and national psychology. □

CINEMA

Post-sex cinema?

Judith Williamson

THE STRANGE SEQUENCE of words above (without the question-mark) was the title of a seminar I attended last week as part of the Piccadilly Festival, whose theme this year was 'Living Dangerously'. As always with words, one tends to assume that they refer to something: but it is hard to determine whether there is, in fact, a referent for the phrase 'post-sex cinema'; or, if there is, what it might be.

The most immediate connotation of 'post-sex' is Aids — unfortunately, given that Aids doesn't spell the end of sex. However, the phrase does have currency in the USA as a trendy way of describing the enormous readjustment Aids has demanded. You would expect to see evidence of this readjustment on the screen; but in mainstream (or particularly in what I think of as 'mainstream independent') cinema such evidence — either as encouragement to safe sex or as anti-gay backlash — is hard to find. Far from being *post*-sex, there seems to be a particular obsession with sex, or, as it's fashionably called, 'sexuality', at the moment. Any crude notion that Aids must result in a general repression of sexual concerns in film must be belied by a glance at recent hits.

On one tack we have *Blue Velvet, 9½ Weeks, Betty Blue*, the soon-to-be-released *Something Wild* — all of which suggest that sex is very much in vogue. But *what* sex? One strand of meaning in the phrase 'post-sex' can be found in its very structure: that pre-fix of the moment which makes it so easy to dismiss whatever (by a sequential irony) comes after it. And if there is a 'post' which accurately describes the films named above it is surely 'post-feminist'. There is a new, 'liberated' *and* 'sexy' woman on the screen at the moment whose persona is a bit like a combination of *both* the images in the 'Underneath They're All Lovable' ad: tough, smart and independent (like the big picture) yet invariably clad in sexy underwear (like the inset). Indeed the trend marked by these films is the very same that has produced the striking expansion of the lacy/frilly/funky camisole/suspenders/french knickers market at the moment, evident from a quick dip into any high-street chain store.

This woman is visually indistinguishable from the old-style sex-object except, with plots which hinge on her new aggressiveness of spirit, she is miraculously turned into the new-style sex-*subject*. And alongside this increasing fascination with the sexually active (straight) woman, there is the increasing number of successful 'mainstream independent' movies with gay and lesbian subject positions — *My Beautiful Laundrette, Desert Hearts, Parting Glances, Prick Up Your Ears*. One could hardly claim that Aids was making homosexuality taboo at the moment. Rather there has been if anything an increasing eroticisation of the male body in mainstream Hollywood film (Richard Gere, Tom Cruise) and an increase in gay subject-matter in up-market independent film. Then there is the smash hit of Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It*, one of the few financially successful black films about sex.

I am not holding these films up as positive examples of anything — most of them have been heavily criticised in this column — but pointing out that there is an increasingly mainstream interest in what have hitherto been the 'margins' both socially and cinematically. This has moved in tandem with current theoretical work on 'difference', 'the Other' and so on: there is a sort of general exploration of colonisation going on at the moment (with the exploration and colonisation often collapsed together).

But ultimately the issue must be not merely *what* (or who) is represented in film, but *how*. Mainstream cinema is always in search of new and more thrilling material, but it is usually absorbed into familiar structures — so that, for example, the gay romance of *Beautiful Laundrette* or the lesbian romance of *Desert Hearts* are highly palatable to an audience accustomed to straight screen romance. However, while these films pack out the Art House cinemas, what is going on at the margins of film production itself?

One of the great achievements of the Piccadilly Festival was to juxtapose the mainstream with the low-budget/short/avant-garde end of the independent sector, and their comparison is very revealing. Some of the most interesting material was found in the Canadian film and video programme 'Prime Cuts', compiled by John Greyson, whose own works combine gay politics, sex, humour and narrative — in *You Taste American*, for example, Michel Foucault, visiting Tennessee Williams, gets arrested in the 1983 wash-house raid in Orillia, Ontario. Other pieces like Kim Tomczak's *See Evil* and Vera Frenkl's *Signs of a Plot* deal directly with the issue of censorship; which is a major part of the climate in which all this work was made.

For while the very project of the mainstream independents is to appear totally liberated, it is here, in the semi-underground, that *oppression* is dealt with. It is in this context that Rosa Von Praunheim's vehement, vicious (to women), irreverent, angry *A Virus Knows No Morals* turns Aids into a form of revenge. It is here that Paul Bettell's *Illegal Tender* defies the 'criminality' of 'under-age' homosexuals, that Greyson documents the persecutions of Apartheid in *A Moffie Called Simon*. It is here that Isaac Julien's moving *This is Not an Aids Advertisement* has to repeat the message 'feel no guilt in your desire'. It's not *sex* that mainstream cinema can't confront — but homophobia, fear, suppression. It is left to those on 'the margins' to confront *these*. □

TRAILERS

Talking of posts, the NFT runs a series of 'postmodern' films through June in conjuction with *Screen*'s postmodernism issue. Details on 01-928 3232.

Beat Films, including many rarely shown avant-garde works, play as part of the Plymouth Arts Centre's Beat Event on 6-7 June. Details on 0752-660060.

TELEVISION

The servant problem

Hugo Williams

THERE ISN'T LIKELY to be a better production of Joe Orton's last and worst play **What The Butler Saw** (BBC2) than the superb piece of machinery constructed by Dinsdale Landen, Prunella Scales, Timothy West and their director Barry Davis. It was like watching a delicate laughter transplant operation. You held your breath lest someone suddenly start corpsing. It was an impression reinforced by the white coats of Doctors Landen and West, the frequent nudity of their victims and the life-and-death sense of urgency chosen by the director to introduce some kind of consistency into what is really a list of jokes.

Obviously this is the only way to do Orton, treat everything with immense sincerity, as if it were satirical. The first production, put on 18 months after he died, failed because it tried to send up what was already a send up, a heroically idiotic approach. There can't have been many boos in the home for this latest highly professional treatment, as there were on the first night in 1969, but were there any laughs? Not for me. It was too programmatic: endless puerile lust and fear expressed in panicky officialese: a one-joke sketch idea, already used by Alfred Jarry, Kafka and various Russians, which might just have been stretched to a decent one-acter. You could sit there admiring the straight faces, but in the end you had to admit that you had one yourself.

Another would-be subversion of a time-honoured genre, this time Victorian melodrama, was Strindberg's **Miss Julie** (BBC2) with the mysteriously sexual Patrick Malahide and a very methody Janet McTeer, both excellent until the second act let them down with its repetition, idea-juggling and apparently period need for a too-neat-ending, à la *The Seagull*.

The first act is gripping in the extreme, as you share the couple's thrilled outrage — he the servant, she the mistress — at their mutual over-

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stepping of the mark at a servants' ball when all but Miss Julie are out of the way. The waves of the sexual tide alternate with those of social forbearance in wonderfully lifelike dialogue, full of human lapses and pre-coital flights of self-delusion and sudden honesty.

It's red-hot psychological stuff: the sexuality of role reversal, money, power and, above all, words, words, words. Sad then that one should have had enough of them by the time they get to bed. One is somehow affected by the post-coital tiredness which they keep complaining of. I stopped taking down the dialogue round about dawn. I found I couldn't believe in any of the melodramatic alternatives discussed as possible endings for the play — going away together, going away alone, committing suicide — any more than I could believe in the magenta sunrise. The only likely outcomes, doing it again immediately or going off to church as if nothing had happened, were dispensed with in favour of cutting off the head of a greenfinch, some kind of symbolic gesture which I couldn't get into at all.

The fascinating thing about *Miss Julie* is that it is both a very modern and a very old-fashioned play: two plays in fact, one saying that sex is a master/servant game, the other that master/servant relationships are sexual. Like the two acts, the first ends in sex, the second in suicide. It was a canny paradox, but I wasn't happy with the social commentary involved. I had a feeling the whole boss class, taking its cue from the greenfinch, was being hypnotised off to the barn to slit its throat along with Miss Julie, which I found impossible to imagine really.

A new series of **Omnibus** (BBC1) began with an excellent drama-doc of the artist George Grosz, part of the current German festival, with Kenneth Haigh as the artist returning briefly to Berlin in the 1950s and offering us his inevitable flashbacks: 'I was a dandy searching all over town for two-reeler Westerns.' The story starts with Dada in 1918, with Grosz travelling all over Germany preaching the communist word. 'The bourgeoisie loved being insulted and kept coming back for more.' Grosz quickly perceived that Dada's brilliance and fun could solve nothing. The enlightened age that had begun with the Renaissance was coming to an end and the age of blind ants born. 'It taught me how to hate.'

It looks in retrospect as if Nazism was the making of Grosz the artist. At last he could feel that his disgusts were not just personal idiosyncrasies, but historical symptoms. 'Revulsion, madness, I copied the graffiti on public toilets. I collected pornographic postcards . . . anything to reflect the chaos. Men were pigs. I despaired of the future.' But it took a particular kind of genuis to allow itself the proximity and knowledge of such hell, in the heroic belief that 'art might have a restraining effect on reality', let alone the forging of graphic skills that might be equal to the task.

The German festival continued with a rather dry tribute to one of Grosz's contemporaries: **The Ballad of the Unknown Composer: The Berlin Years of Kurt Weill** (BBC2). This largely musical programme took pains to point out that, as well as all the popular stuff with Brecht, which we all love, Weill wrote a lot of little known operas on his own, which are really more interesting. On a first hearing you couldn't go along with this analysis.

For a succinct review of the latest *Omnibus*, **Michelangelo Revealed** (BBC1) I couldn't do better than *Radio Times*: 'Now a new, vibrant and colourful Michelangelo has been revealed and the experts have been forced to reappraise this giant of the Renaissance.' □

MUSIC

What Katerina did

Andrew Clements

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk
Coliseum until 26 June

FEW PRODUCTIONS in recent times at the English National Opera have been as comprehensively successful as David Pountney's staging, the first in Britain, of Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth*. It registers instantly among the finest achievements of Pountney's reign at the Coliseum, rivalled only by his *Rusalka* in its combination of visual flair and dramatic certainty. In many ways it's the consummation of ENO's long-running affair with the Slavonic repertory; in a score that works with and against the grain of the Russian epic tradition the company's experience is invaluable.

For what *Lady Macbeth* demonstrates is the genuinely radical and subversive cast of Shostakovich's music in the early 1930s, and how the savage denunciation of the opera in *Pravda* in January 1936, shortly after Stalin had been to see it, was not merely a knee-jerk to the uncompromising dissonance of the musical language, but a recognition of its total rejection both of the norms of Soviet art, socialist realism in particular, and of the sanctity of the epic conception of the Russian people. When the opera was revived in its castrated form as *Katerina Ismailova* in the 1960s (also seen at Covent Garden) Shostakovich had done his penance: 'That article on the third page of *Pravda* changed my entire existence,' he said later; it had changed his music irrevocably.

One of the triumphs of Pountney's conception is that he has managed to encompass all these facets; it could be argued that the one element in *Lady Macbeth* that goes unrecognised at the Coliseum is the 19th-century setting of the original Leskov story, for the provincial Russia in which this Katerina Ismailova (the Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District of the full Russian title) is left to wither and to begin her lethal chain of self-destruction, is the provincial Russia of the 1930s. The satire is sharpened beyond the point which could have been contemplated in Stalin's reign; the portrayal of the Siberian prison camp in which Katerina finally kills herself in the last scene seems now, with the benefit of historical hindsight, horribly appropriate.

But, otherwise, the teeming detail — the chorus drilled like automata, the heavy industrial machinery of Stefanos Lazaridis' towering set, the surreal use onstage of the extra brass players as a maniacal counterpoint to Katerina's headlong rush into adultery with the first partner who comes along, the desperate, broken trail of prisoners in the final scene — all seems absolutely right. Counterpointed with the deliberately overblown extroversion of Shostakovich's score, parody piled upon pastiche, with the glaze just occasionally cracked to reveal the kernel of profound melancholic lyricism beneath, and superbly realised by the ENO orchestra conducted by Mark Elder, it becomes a rich and absolutely involving package.

The element which binds all the heterogeneous facets into a single coherent portrait is the character of Katerina herself. Among Josephine Barstow's already formidable gallery of tragic victims this seems quite exceptional; in an ideal world one might hope for the role to be taken by a soprano with darker timbre and greater vocal weight, but it would be difficult to contemplate anyone playing the part with more intensity or holding attention more fiercely than Barstow does. She dominates the stage from first curtain to last. Two moments of absolute stillness — the inert boredom of her life in the Ismailov household in the first scene, while the stage is filled with the busyness of the merchant's household, and the almost unbearable intensity of her icily contained hatred in the final act, when she concentrates all her power into a last moment of murderous rage — demonstrate the completeness of her command far more than the abandoned eroticism of the central scenes. They are the artificial Katerina, Barstow and Pountney suggest; the genuinely tragic woman is revealed in those quieter moments. It's because of the effectiveness of that side of the character that the

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opera can become a profound tragedy, with a central figure capable of arousing genuine sympathy, rather than just the luridly decked tale of a scheming, selfish woman.

One of the subtleties throughout the casting is that, for all the brilliantly realised set-piece farce and satire, the principal roles are studied with enormous care and intelligence. The tyrannical father-in-law Boris is conventionally viewed as a small-time despot, cruel and unyielding, but Willard White gives the part far more depth, a patriarch whose fierce attempts to preserve his daughter-in-law's virtue are complicated by his own physical attraction towards her. Stuart Kale's Zinovy, impotent husband of Katerina, was having throat problems on the first night, but the elements of a carefully composed portrait were clearly visible. The priapic lover Sergei, whom Katerina takes with her to catastrophe, is played by Jacque Trussel with a convincing combination of macho assertion and natural charm, making their affair a perfectly credible event.

Ultimately, of course, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* is a tragic story of a peculiarly Russian kind, the story of an individual destroyed by the stifling narrowness of the society in which she lived. It does not, though, moralise; its objective tone and, especially, its almost heartless musical treatment are thoroughly modern. The series of works upon which Shostakovich's greatness is founded followed the composition of this opera; perhaps, after the ENO production, we should more properly extend that series to include it too. □

MUSIC

Rich and famous

Simon Reynolds

FOR A WHILE, ZTT was the hippest record label around — one of those rare instances where pop schemers manage to translate their masterplan into mass success. (The McLaren school of Manifesto Pop is littered with failures, sad figures like Tony James of Sigue Sigue Sputnik, Win, Malcolm McLaren, and, before long, Age of Chance). The first three Frankie Goes to Hollywood singles were a sensation, a perfect sequence of scandal, protest and schmaltzified (staged) sell-out; Art of Noise were a poltergeist intrusion into the world of chart dance. If you cared to think past the public commotion, it was apparent that what ZTT were producing wasn't exactly music, but *hits* composed of a series of effects, gimmicks, pyrotechnical flourishes.

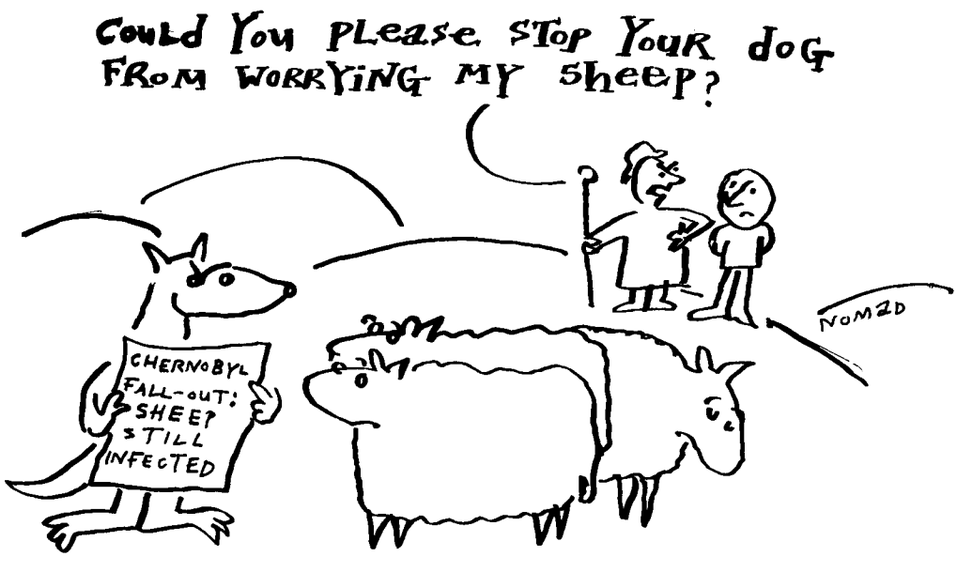
This, depending on where you sat, was either very avant-garde or a depressing benchmark of the future of pop (the Good Song replaced by attention span-reducing production effects, designed to synchronise with video quick-cutting, appealing to a public cretinised by overkill, incapable of following a narrative). It also became clear that ZTT's overlit bombast worked only as a public music; it was not music to take into the bedroom, or your heart.

Since this high point in 1984, ZTT have failed — bar Grace Jones' magisterial 'Slave To The Rhythm' and Propaganda's 'Duel' — to have any public impact at all. Most of the music they've released, including the Frankie follow-up, has been a wretched brand of pomp disco — goes down a storm on the Continent. 'Snobbery and Decay' by **Act** is the wittiest and most flamboyant record they've released in an age. Act are Claudia Brucken, the singer with the late Propaganda, and Thomas Leer, who made such fabulous, lost, electric-futurist dance records in 1981. (1981 is ZTT's 'lost moment', a brief phase when the dream of a literate pop that made the charts seemed a possibility). Act are great because, in trying to overcome the innate limitations of her voice, Brucken has developed a bewitching repertoire of mannerisms and vocal quirks; because Leer is the first *musician* ZTT have worked with. 'Snobbery and Decay' is a sumptuous spree of frills and fancy bits, punctured with snippets of Liza Minelli and Joan Rivers. It is Act indulging their amoral and non-judgmental fascination with 'the lifestyles of the rich and famous', surrendering to the 'suave entrapment' of the surfaces of the high life.

Act shirk the chore of taking a position on all this decadence and, instead, flit between voyeurism and disgust, convinced as they are of the obesity, barbarian egotism and ripe sickness that lies beneath the tinsel and make-up. There's something odious about this posture of detached, impotent aestheticism, in which the dysenteric monsoon of mass culture is seen as something to wrest amusement from, rather than criticise; it reminds me of how, in the wake of various attempts to tamper with the notions of trash and trivia, a kind of sub-camp aesthetic has developed, a sort of oneupmanship in the pursuit of lowbrow things to celebrate. The result is a paralysis of the very idea of making priorities: whereas I'd still insist on the right to argue that, say, Throwing Muses will do more interesting damage to your insides than current camp favourites Tom Jones and Liberace; are a superior way of passing time. Still, 'Snobbery and Decay' is as luxurious and as blankly mesmerising as the high life it's mesmerised by.

An aeon and an ocean away from Act's anti-authentic fascination with artifice and the seduction of surfaces are **The Replacements**, with their creed of failure-as-authenticity and their hatred of image and presentation. Americans don't have a postmodern pop, as yet. *Pleased To Meet Me* (Sire) is their best LP yet, tales of loserdom and lonesomeness, that come in the form of smashing power pop and raucous, inebriate rock 'n' roll. Mainman Paul Westerberg has a great boozy voice and writes words that hurt. 'Can't Hardly Wait' — a bedraggled, triumphant climax to the record, arms outstretched in search of a redemptive love — is the most overwhelming music released this month.

The Band of Holy Joy offer a British, more 'pretentious' version of this quest for authenticity; their search for the lost 'real' beneath the seamless banality of suburban hyper-reality leads them to the decrepitude and grime of the decaying inner-city — New Cross, to be precise. They are fascinated by society's residues and rejects, tramps and ne'er-do-wells, the neglected, damaged and unbalanced. The London of *More Tales From The City* (Flim Flam) is paved with blighted possibilities and blasted dreams; love figures, invariably, not as escape or consolation but as a trap, a mutual dragging down further still into the mire. Harrowing stuff, although The Band of Holy Joy insist, with touching obstinacy, that their music is full of hope and joy. What does make it uplifting is that, around Johnny Brown's livid wound of a voice, is a beautiful swirl of sound, as remote and unperturbed as the stars. The sometimes intolerable honesty of the voice is balanced by this impassive stellar beauty, which seems to be arguing, quietly, that there *is* an end to all woe, in heaven. What Band of Holy Joy do is take junkshop instruments (a battered trombone, an accordion, a violin) and some out-moded technology (quaint electronic keyboards, an ancient, staggeringly primitive drum machine) and construct a shimmering layered sound that is as serenely lugubrious as Kraftwerk, as desolate and religious as Suicide. Like Suicide, or Tom Waits, this is a complex and exotic beauty constructed from minimalist strands. □



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WORK IN PROGRESS

With their hands on their arts

Naseem Khan

AS RECENT DAYS have gone by, those sections of the parties' manifestos relating to the arts have been arriving through my letterbox — and slim envelopes they've turned out to be. For although, a few weeks back, the politicos all claimed hotly that the arts were now on the political agenda, sure as hell — to judge from the manifestos — they don't come very high up.

A closer look at the bits in question doesn't signally change the picture (though Labour's new extended policy, 'Voices and Choices', does — but we'll come to that later). The Conservatives' offering is bland, boring and self-congratulatory, sticking entirely with the status quo. 'Our international reputation in the arts has never been higher. Tourists flock to the country to enjoy the highest standards of theatre, music, artistic excellence and our museums.' They aim to maintain support, safeguard heritage, encourage museums to make 'national treasures' more accessible. There is a hint of something more in the declaration that excellence should be available everywhere, an echo of the Arts Council's *Glory of the Garden* with its regional tilt. But excellence without funding is not easy to achieve, even with the will-o'-the-wisp promise of business sponsorship.

The Alliance starts more bullishly — 'We will double arts funding within the lifetime of one Parliament' — and offers a Minister with cabinet status to head an expanded area. Like Labour, the Alliance is feeling for a link with the sports world, but merely asks for 'maximum access to sports facilities for the whole community'. The Alliance's regional policy gives the impression, predictably, of more depth — decentralisation, the replacement of grants by endowment grants, continued sposorship. But, on the whole, its points are not knitted together to suggest an overall policy.

On the face of it, Labour's manifesto coverage looks equally perfunctory. Its proposal for a united Ministry does not mention cabinet status for the Minister. It says, somewhat blandly, 'the development of central and local government support to culture and entertainment is essential to the extension of choice, access and participation'. Broadcasting's independence would be protected, legislation would limit the concentration of ownership in the media and a launch fund would be set up for new publications. Hints of a more substantial inner manifesto come in the opening section, which promises: 'Labour will make provision for the co-ordination and development of leisure amenities and the leisure and cultural industries.'

This is not developed in the manifesto, and might almost be seen as a piece of rhetoric. However, Labour's launch last week of its newly developed 'Voices and Choices' at long last provides evidence of new thinking not only on how the arts should be supported, but on what constitutes the arts, and in what sort of context. It is required reading.

'Voices and Choices' moves Norman Buchan's ground-breaking 'Charter for the Arts' on several steps and, in doing so, eradicates the lack of overall direction that this column noted some months ago. Major elements from Buchan's valuable paper remain — the combined Arts and Media ministry, the strong regional stress. Labour's particular strength is in allowing for a statutory element in the Rate Support Grant to go the arts and museums. Each local authority would be asked for an arts development plan which it would draw up with regional arts associations and local interest groups. This would decisively pass the initiative down to a more grassroots, local level.

A comparison of the two Labour papers reveals some omissions. The Open Cultural University has vanished. So — unfortunately — has the one per cent levy on major public and private building works to go to public art projects. I could, sadly, find no reference to British folk music and dance, ludicrously unfunded in the present system. The Scottish TUC could have been credited for its singular commitment in employing (a rare union post) an arts worker. In some cases, the paper suggests tricky areas — wholesale devolution carries the danger of distorting regional arts associations' work and needs safeguards. And the figure of 40,000 new jobs needs explanation.

But these are largely cavils, outweighed by the vision that the paper holds out of a united scheme, taking in elements like fashion, the music industry, design, as well as the traditional arts and the many areas that this column has regularly followed and which, though important to a lot of people, have never been regarded with much seriousness by policymakers: arts and young people, the voluntary/amateur sector, arts centres and libraries, training and job opportunities, festivals and foreign tours.

Sensibly, except for that 40,000, the urge to provide figures is resisted. In fact a commendable restraint and commonsense runs through the paper. It talks about the 'substantial additional money', 'a significant fund' and is 'sceptical' about the economics of an Independent National Radio Station. It takes its stand, on the contrary, on a far more fundamental awareness of the way in which the goal of cultural diversity cannot be left to market forces alone. It needs a strategy that is planned across the board, taking in public, independent and voluntary sectors at national, regional and local levels. 'Many difficulties will be encountered,' prophesies the report, 'in putting these policies into practice.' Undoubtedly, but this is still the most helpful platform for the arts for many years. □

**Chart compiled by Felix Culper*

	New ministry	Money	Jobs	Arts Council	Local authorities	Museum charges	Press	Living artists	Clever ideas	Not-so-clever ideas
Lab	Ministry of Arts and Media. No cabinet seat guarantee.	'Substantial increases' — no figure.	The creation of 40,000 jobs in the 'arts and media' in the first two years.	'Increased independence' Keeps national companies. New international role.	New statutory obligation, assisted by Rate Support Grant.	'Opposition' pledge.	Enquiry to be launched. Press Council to be reformed. Legislation to prevent limited ownership.	Improved training.	'National audit' for capital repairs to arts infrastructure. VAT zero-rated on live performances.	Regulation of air waves left with Home Office.
Con	No	No undertaking. Prospect of business sponsorship tax concessions.	Not mentioned.	Where 'standards' have fallen, should reduce grants. (Not mentioned in manifesto.)	Should contract out 'parts at least' of library services. (Not mentioned in manifesto.)	Trustees encouraged to earn income. (Not mentioned in manifesto.)	Not mentioned.	Climate of 'giving rather than taking'. Assisted Place Scheme to be extended to choir boys over eight. (Not mentioned in manifesto.)	Local rate relief for art and craft studios.	Art schools to be 'improved' with emphasis on 'realities of modern industry'.
All.	Ministry of Arts and Media. Cabinet seat guarantee.	'We will double arts funding in the lifetime of one Parliament.'	Not mentioned.	Appointments to be scrutinised by select committee. 'Venture capital' role.	'Enhanced role' — no details.	Not mentioned.	Not mentioned.	Not mentioned.	Reform of artists' copyright legislation.	'Endowment Trusts' promised — without homework.

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Books

NAZISM

Revenge of the sons

Jeffrey Weeks

Male Fantasies
KLAUS THEWELEIT *Polity* £27.50 & £8.95

SEVEN MARRIAGES. Seven German 'soldier males', survivors of the Great War, who gravitate in the aftermath of defeat towards the Freikorps: gangs of right-wing marauders who contrived to stave off the German revolution by unleashing a 'white terror'. Seven sets of writings which, through autobiography or fiction, celebrate that experience. And seven wives, each one referred to, some romanticised, even idealised, but all remaining . . . nameless.

Beginning with that small but significant absence, Klaus Theweleit's book uncovers a pathology of male fantasies of defeat, rage and revenge which prefigures the even more grotesque realities of the 1930s. Many of the Freikorps commandoes were later to become leading cadres in the ranks of Nazidom — even those who did not reveal a 'fascism of the mind', at the heart of which is a fear of the body and a terror of the formlessness and dissolution represented by femininity. Like a bud opening to reveal stamens turned into snakes' heads and petals corroded with disease, the 'involuntary testimony', in Lutz Niethammer's phrase, of the long forgotten Freikorps memoirs provides a frightening insight into the political unconscious of the 20th century.

Theweleit's book created something of an academic stir when it first appeared in Germany some ten years ago — the most unlikely doctoral thesis you will ever read — and became a controversial best seller. It is easy to see why. This long (435 pages of text), discursive, awkwardly organised book (there are just two chapters in all those pages) wades in to a number of intractable historical, theoretical and political issues with a splendid abandon.

The result is not so much convincing as both frustrating and exhilarating. Do we really need, or deserve, a rather flat, eight-page summary of Elaine Morgan's *The Descent of Woman*, unbelievable even in the original? Couldn't we do without yet another derivative excursus on the rise of the bourgeois individual, even if the source is Norbert Elias? At the same time, there is something brave as well as foolhardy about this reckless welding together of literary excavation, theorising about gender, psychoanalytic speculations and grand generalising. The subtitle of the book is exotic: 'Women, floods, bodies, history'. But it suitably sums up the esoteric appeal of the work.

Male fantasies about women are at the heart of this book. In a revealing digression, Theweleit anatomises his subjects' asides on love. These soldier males 'love' the German people and fatherland, 'love' their homeland soil and native village, their uniforms, their comrades and superiors, their weapons, 'love' hunting and fighting and their horses. They rarely express any love for their women. This has nothing to do with a latent or repressed homosexuality. Woman, Theweleit argues, is a 'code word' in these Freikorps texts for the whole complex of nature, for anything having to do with feelings, the body and the unconscious.

Poster on the stationing of black French troops in Germany (after 1918) from *Male Fantasies*

The language used about women in the writings either screens the men against their actual existence (by idealising women as nameless wives, mothers, or pure sisters), or destroys them (especially proletarian women and the phallic, castrating 'rifle-women' of the revolutionary movement). What this suggests, according to Theweleit, is that these men are bound together by their deep-seated fear of the vengeance of women, a fear rooted in the psychic trauma the boy child experiences in his broken identification with his mother. Against the threat women represent, the men freeze up, hold themselves rigid to ward off the terror o dissolution, and of full bodily life.

This is one of the psychic roots of fascism. Nazi ritual offers these emotionally crippled men a 'symbolic liberation' of and from their desires and fears: 'The utopia of fascism is an edenic freedom from responsibility.' A seamless web unites the individual (male) pathology with a cultural disaster.

Theweleit's explanation of all this owes something to Wilhelm Reich (who is defended against the arch-rationalist Freud), something to object-relations theory, but, above all, something to the theory of 'desiring production' advanced by the French writers Deleuze and Guattari. For them, the polyvocal forms of desire are an active element in the shaping of social forms. The disruptive energy of desire is precariously constrained by the oedipal structures of our culture, which are predicated upon the subordination of women. According to

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Theweleit, the concrete form of the struggle against the ceaseless productivity of desire is a battle against women, and especially against female sexuality.

It has to be said that, despite the acres of space devoted to this theoretical approach, the explanation remains at the level of assertion rather than empirical demonstration. If the fascist mentality reveals something about all men, shouldn't there be an explanation of why only some men (as well as women) actually do become fascists? Even amongst the seven men described at the beginning of the book, one, Niemoller, became a famous anti-Nazi. What does this tell us? The concentration on the literature obscures the need to explore the lives as well.

There is a further disturbing element in the book. It emphasises the ways in which the sources silence women. Yet women, as active subjects in history, are also absent from this book. 'Capitalist-patriarchy' marches onto the stage of history, disposes its will and constructs its agents, with barely a hint of resistance or change. Instead there is more than a hint that, for Theweleit, 'woman' represents the life force, a principle of true liberation. Isn't this just the mirror image of the cast of mind his book dissects?

The real value of the book lies not in the theoretical elaborations but in its concrete analyses: in the acute reading of the silences of the sources with which the book begins; and with the dazzling account of the significance of the flood metaphor which dominates the second chapter. It is also full of fascinating illustrations. Theweleit's book may not fully live up to its ambitions, but it whets the appetite for more — and a further volume is in fact promised. Above all, it should remind us to read the evidence for what is not there, as much as for what is. □

PAPERBACKS

Open the box

Ruth Rendell

THE WORKS OF the great psychoanalysts are often as readable as fiction and the writings of Freud are like the best of biography. Alice Miller is another such. Her field is the psychological abuse of children and what she has to say about it in **The Drama of Being a Child** (trans. Ruth Ward, Virago, £3.95) and **For Your Own Good** (trans. Hildegarde and Hunter Hannum, Virago, £4.95) is both illuminating and distressingly familiar. The reader has the complex experience of recognising a great truth simultaneously with revelation and the realisation of personal tragedy long and deeply suppressed. Childhood injury, whether subjectively experienced or unwittingly perpetrated, here appears the more awful because of its irrevocability.

'Even the worst criminal of all time was not born a criminal,' Dr Miller writes, taking Adolf Hitler as one of her subjects for examination. If Hitler had a loving mother even she was not free from the 'poisonous pedagogy' which is aimed at shaping children to their parents' taste: her husband's submissive serving maid, addressing him incredibly as 'uncle', she impassively witnessed the brutal beatings of her son. And a reason is found for Hitler's euthanasia law and need to liberate Germany from the 'plague' of the mentally ill in his enforced daily exposure to the frightening behaviour of his mad aunt. His adult life was a long act of revenge.

If Dr Miller's books, refreshingly free of jargon, read like picaresque fiction, Sue Miller's **The Good Mother** (Pan, £2.95) has all the absence of imagination of a case history.

This novel, we are told, was one of the biggest hardback sellers in the United States last year. It is hard to see why, even allowing for obvious areas of identification and a child abuse theme not too far removed from Dr Miller's sickening accounts. Two curious things about it especially invite comment: all the main characters except the child are repellently unlikable, while the child and her fate are pitiful enough to inhibit reading to the end. Yet there is a feeling this was far from the author's intention. And so faintly adumbrated is the good mother's inner life, apart from tiresome obsessions with sex and self, that it is necessary to look back and check that this is indeed a first-person narration.

Comparisons are specially odious to novelists, even flattering ones. Uniqueness is generally desired, if very nearly unattainable. And a comparison between Anne Fine's **The Killjoy** (Black Swan, £2.95) and that classic piece of literature of the kidnap genre, *The Collector*, seems anyway misplaced. *The Killjoy* is a subtle piece of writing, in which character is portrayed in understatement exceptional in a first novel: in which, for instance, whole worlds may be inferred about the true nature of a protagonist who thinks drowning a merciful death. But all it has in common with *The Collector* is that it is about a man, ugly in body and soul, obsessed with a beautiful girl. Fine as it is, and no puns are made here on the author's name, it must lack the enduring impact of John Fowles' novel which glows with full colour and rings with voices in the memory. Because the art student collected like a netted butterfly is every reader's dream daughter, her destiny an outrage? Because Anne Fine's man and girl, like Sue Miller's lovers, are so extremely nasty?

Another first novel, Frances Thomas' **Seeing Things** (Dent, £3.95), irresistibly brings the early A.N. Wilson to mind. Barbara Pym too. But, wherever one's personal allegiance may lie, Catholics are more fun — at any rate, in print — than Anglicans. This isn't the first fiction about a girl seeing visions of the Virgin but it may well be the best.

Categories are like Chinese boxes. Open one and find another, and inside 'Women' is its sub-genre 'Housewife'. Within its parameters, going potty through floor-scrubbing compulsions is a well-documented theme, but the scope of Robert Irwin's **Limits of Vision** (Penguin, £2.95) is so far from any vignettes this may conjure as to raise gasps at its range. Almost unhesitatingly it is possible to pronounce this novel unique, a ravishing product of pure imagination. It takes a writer of rare insight to see the potentials of dust and dirt as an enemy army and the Kingdom of Mucor as a place where Everywoman's good fight must be fought and pilgrimage made to reach the Celestial City. Mad Marcia's anguish springs from the magnification of trivia and her pleasure is the precarious joy of the schizophrenic to whom a finer intuition and a more advanced insight is given than to the sane.

This is a kind of hyper-reality, to use an invention of Umberto Eco, that learned conjuror with words and signs, but his travels never take him beyond the limits of our known world. The excellence of the essays in **Travels in Hyper-reality** (Picador, £3.50) lies in their diversity, their political urgency and Eco's conviction of the validity of reason. One is about American kitsch, another the modern passion for the Middle Ages and what he calls 'escapism à la Tolkien'. 'Who could have suspected . . .' asks the author of *The Name of the Rose*, 'that people were ready to swallow the registers of a mediaeval parish in Poitou as if they were the chronicle of an Agatha

French teenagers

G. Parker

In the Cafe Des Marins I watch the young
The window is opaque with steam, rain streaked
The espresso machine mutters and erupts.

Their summer holiday is now this bar;
They don't mind. Just met and all on first name terms
They kiss and proffer cheeks, embrace, clasp hands.

Here, they carry the teenage weight with poise
Yet under the practised chic the ache is there
Fingers drum a table top; cool or distressed?

Two girls stroke each other's hair. Lighters are flicked.
For all their skills they can't belong enough.
A boy greets five girls and has to kiss ten cheeks.

The juke box thumps. At home in any town and none
A girl adjusts dark glasses, exhales smoke.

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Christie Vicarage?'

Eco speculates as to whether the spinning jenny and the power loom were neo-Gothic machinery, but this is no more a Luddites' Lament than is **Pandaemonium** (Picador, £3.95), a deservedly distinguished anthology of writings on the coming of the machine. It was compiled by filmmaker, artist and editor Humphrey Jennings and spans more than 200 years, from Milton's hell to Ruskin's storm-cloud of the 19th century and T.H. Huxley's 'apocalyptic visions looking down Oxford Street at a sunset'. These are letters and verses, reviews and panegyrics, commentaries and discourses, composing a marvellous collage. □

Ruth Rendell's most recent novel, Talking to Strange Men, *was published by Century Hutchinson last month.*

HEALTH

Neither sex safe

Amanda Hopkinson

Women and the Aids Crisis
DIANE RICHARDSON *Pandora* £3.95

IT'S A RELIEF to find a new Aids book that, unlike many of its predecessors, doesn't set out to monger scares or score political points.

Which isn't to say that *Women and the Aids Crisis* shirks being political. Set primarily in the UK, though drawing on starkly different experiences in Africa (where at least 50 per cent of Aids victims are women) and the USA (where a rising seven per cent are), it offers a sustained indictment of the inadequacy of government policies to date — not only within the specific area of Aids information campaigns, but also for health, social services and housing policies that consistently fail to meet real needs. And, while pointing out that 'the health system is already biased against the needs of women, especially those who are poor, black or who may possibly be at risk of Aids through injecting drugs or prostitution', Richardson notes that the vastly greater proportion of women who are carers rather than Aids sufferers get equally short shrift — 'community care' being, of course, but a euphemism for female exploitation. Yet her politics are inherent to her approach, her feminism intrinsic and her style of writing accessible to readers of all political persuasions.

The latter is rare in a social psychologist, given the jargon and obscurity that frequently characterise the field. Richardson's accessibility seems to spring, at least partly, from her teaching experience both at Sheffield's Department of Sociological Studies and as Visiting Professor at the San Francisco Centre for Education and Research. And it is from the second that she draws a number of her suggestions for adaptation over here, since she believes the UK pattern to follow the US one most closely.

This occasionally lands her in logistical difficulties: on the one hand she wishes to criticise council-housing policy and the dearth of funding for appropriate accommodation for the terminally ill; on the other, she advocates private programmes, such as the San Francisco Shanti Project, which flourish only with voluntary support and in a piecemeal way. Another question-mark hovers over her advocacy of how to treat children with Aids. On the one hand, the New York Gay Men's Health Crisis, with its visiting and foster schemes, is held up for emulation; on the other, there is the curious advice 'to tell as few people as possible that one's child is infected with HIV or has Aids', for fear of discrimination.

But these are hesitations over matters of detail. The substance of the book is strong, clear and useful advice. Instructions on safe sex, taking precautions while surviving Aids or recognising symptoms come in boxed inserts. Specific sections address women in particular categories, while a chapter on 'Lesbians and Aids' warns against assuming that there can ever be complete immunity, even in this very low-risk group. Direct recommendations — whether for more counsellors, research, funding or education — are always made with the corollary of how they could best be implemented and a warning against simply providing more of the same. And the book leaves us with the parting reminder that, even 'in the US, where over 2000 women already have Aids, funds to research *women* and Aids have been virtually non-existent'. □

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SCANDAL

Doctor at sea

Nigel Fountain

An Affair of State: The Profumo Case and The Framing of Stephen Ward
PHILLIP KNIGHTLEY and CAROLINE KENNEDY
Cape £12.95

STEPHEN WARD'S onetime friend Lord Astor went downhill so rapidly after the osteopath's suicide, write Knightly and Kennedy, that Lady Astor brought in an exorcist to evict the evil spirits from his Cliveden estate in general and Ward's former cottage in the grounds in particular. There was a lot of evil around, reported the Catholic crusader. Whether it was ousted, or remains to plague the holidaymakers enjoying bogus Edwardian vacations in 1980s Cliveden, isn't detailed.

I reckon that the unfortunate Dr Ward's ghost is elsewhere. His spirit floats late at night on Channel 4, in that terrible crime series from the early 1960s, *Edgar Lustgarten Presents* aka *Scales of Justice*. There, amidst the GPO-regulation white telephones, fast girls and slow cars, roams the osteopath, doomed to quest through eternity for a good time in late Macmillan-period England, and denied the binoculars to pry on late 1960s love-ins.

Not that Ward didn't try to make the best of the time he had. The authors track his career — assisted by Ward's own taped recollections, which had been romantically gathering dust in a country attic — from Torquay through a 1930s osteopathy course in Missouri to a London milieu where aching bones provided a passport to pressing flesh with the great and ghastly of the 1950s and early 1960s. It is an interesting tale, if occasionally flecked with minor editing and textual inaccuracies, that moves to the fateful introduction of Ward to the Soviet naval attaché Evgeny Ivanov, through the good offices of the then *Daily Telegraph* editor Sir Colin Coote. Soon afterwards, exactly when is still unclear, Conservative minister John Profumo met Christine Keeler. The rest is tabloid history.

Or not; Knightley and Kennedy say that Ward was employed as a conduit for M15 with Ivanov, his embassy and, effectively, the Kremlin; that he was taken very seriously as such by some of our rulers; that when the scandal broke M15 dumped him and that, through cowardice, collusion and ruthlessness, his associates destroyed him.

Ward mixed with elements of the establishment but he, a vicar's son from an indifferent public school, was not *of* them. And his sense of timing proved to be unfortunate. It was one thing to play a discreet role in the Cuban missile crisis, something else to believe one mattered, or to be left exposed when the establishment was running for cover.

And running it was, as the long post-war boom went through one of its periodic hiccups. Why, there were 300,000 unemployed, the French were being beastly about Macmillan's Common Market application, the Vassall spy tribunal was creating unpleasantness and the young were listening to wild beat music rather than their elders. The authors also point out that the Prime Minister was unlikely to be cheered by the secret information from Moscow that Kim Philby had clocked into his office at the KGB; and Chelsea police were doubtless surprised by the receipt of a statement from Norman Scott about his affair with Jeremy Thorpe. Few of us may have been much improved for that knowledge as such, but the sweet smell of decay made for an edgy and irritated elite. On that cusp of the post-war era, as the old gang retreated to prepare for the false dawn of 1970 and the radiant sunlight of 1979, Ward made an admirable centrepiece for the farewell bonfire.

According to the victim, 'the truth is very simple: I loved people'. Hmm. Five years later everybody of his ilk loved everybody, and precious little did that add up to either. Between the lines of Knightley and Kennedy's sympathetic sketch of his character is a more devious personality. He was a Professor Higgins for the early affluent society, targetting girls from prefab land for bit parts in bad movies and starring roles in rich, sleazy romances. He wasn't, as prosecuting counsel Mervyn Griffith-Jones — he of *Lady Chatterley* — or Justice Marshall smeared him, a pimp or a procurer, but he was a manipulator — if, as it turned out, a bad one.

A quarter of a century has passed. Does it all matter? Yes. Amidst all the talk of those who have paid their debt to society, and the foul pomposities

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of the Dennings and Hailshams, it is right that the framing of Stephen Ward should be clearly stated. More importantly it provides an illuminating lesson in the corner-cutting, case-rigging ways of our rulers. The police played their part, of course, but they were walk-ons. The directors were elsewhere; they still are. □

POLITICS

Master juggler

Peter Shore

Time and Chance
JAMES CALLAGHAN *Collins* £15.95

THERE HAVE BEEN three periods of Labour rule since 1945 and Jim Callaghan was a minister during all three. A promising junior in the Attlee years, under Harold Wilson he served first as Chancellor of the Exchequer, then as Home Secretary, then finally as Foreign Secretary before succeeding Wilson as Premier in April 1976.

With so long and varied a career at or near the top of British politics, Jim Callaghan's memoirs will not fail to attract the keen interest of political contemporaries and serious students of public affairs, as well as a wider general public.

It certainly deserves to do so, for, content apart, it has the great merit of being written by a man who grew steadily with his experience, who brings a sane and balanced approach to people and to policies and who, in spite of the enormous achievements of his career, retains an engaging modesty throughout.

There are, however, two major omissions. Jim Callaghan not only held high office in government, he was also a member of Labour's National Executive Committee for over 20 years. Since the character, policies and performance of the Labour Party have been shaped just as much by intra-party struggle and debate as they have been by national events and the experience of government, it is strange indeed that virtually nothing is said about the Labour Party.

The second omission is Jim Callaghan's decision to close his narrative with the General Election defeat of May 1979.

A three-page postscript simply records the fact that he was persuaded to carry on, reluctantly, as leader of the Party and leader of the opposition until November 1980. Yet that 18-month period witnessed the most dramatic and traumatic convulsions in the history of the Labour Party, leading not only to major policy changes, including the adoption of unilateral nuclear disarmament, but to a fundamental re-writing of the Labour Party's Constitution, with the introduction of mandatory reselection of MPs and Parliamentary Candidates and the Trade Union/CLP dominated Electoral College for the future choice of Labour's leaders.

What *Time and Chance* does tell us about is Jim Callaghan's experience as a Senior Cabinet Minister under Harold Wilson and, most importantly, the story of his own Premiership.

Those latter years, from April 1976 to May 1979, have been written off in Labour mythology as a period of cynical betrayal by the Labour government of its socialist commitment and its manifesto pledges.

It was nothing of the kind. But this is the first substantial account of the problems that faced the Labour government and the remarkable efforts made to surmount them — when, at no time, did Callaghan command a Labour majority in the House of Commons.

The economic situation in 1976 was catastrophic. No real adjustment had been made to the quadrupling of oil prices in 1974. Inflation was running at 18 per cent, a vast gap still existed on the balance of payments, reserves were totally inadequate and the Labour government had exhausted its ability to borrow money from the oil producers. A short-term credit, $5 billion, was arranged with the Central Bankers in June 1976, a month after Callaghan's election as PM, in order to sustain confidence and to prevent a further run on the pound. Much of it had gone before repayment was due in December: recourse to the IMF or a massive shift towards trader protection was unavoidable.

The Cabinet could easily have broken up on this issue. But, as *Time and Chance* records, the issue was gradually defused in an exhausting and exhaustive series of Cabinet meetings. Meanwhile, in private initiatives, Callaghan had won over Tony Crosland — who led one group of opponents — by telling him that he would resign unless he had Crosland's support; at separate Head of Government meetings, he arranged with the Germans and Americans for a safety net for sterling.

As one who strongly opposed the IMF loan, I have to say that the terms that finally were agreed had a barely noticeable deflationary effect — and, indeed, unemployment fell during the last 12 months of the Labour government.

Callaghan did make one major mistake. He gave a quite unnecessary hostage to fortune in his extraordinary annual conference speech in 1976 when he said:

> We used to think that you could spend your way out of a recession and increase employment by cutting taxes and boosting government spending. I tell you in all candour that that option no longer exists and that insofar as it ever did exist, it only worked on each occasion since the war by injecting a bigger dose of inflation into the economy followed by a higher level of unemployment as the next step.

His defence of this on the grounds that, in the circumstances of 1976, increased public spending was not the remedy is correct. But to assert that it was true throughout the post-war period was not only wrong but a gift, that they have never ceased to display, to the monetarists and Thatcherites.

Having surmounted the economic crisis — and kept the Cabinet together — Callaghan then won a further breathing space for the government by the Lib/Lab pact of March 1977, by the second Devolution Bill that won the support of the Scottish Nationalists and by neutralising the Ulster Unionists by increasing the number of Northern Ireland MPs. What sealed its fate was the breakdown of the counter-inflation policy and of agreement with the Trade Unions. In retrospect, it is easy to say that he should have dissolved parliament in October 1978, but no one at the time could have foreseen, with an election only a few months ahead, the collapse of authority of the TUC (over its affiliated unions) and of Trade Union leaders (over their own members) that then took place.

There are many lessons to be learnt from the experiences of the Callaghan government. But the contrast between a Labour government, without the benefit of North Sea oil, holding unemployment throughout the first major economic slump since the war to just over a million while promoting the social services and greater equality of incomes and, eight years later, Mrs Thatcher's government with the full benefit of North Sea oil, presiding over an uncreasingly unequal and divided society, with over three million unemployed, is some measure of Jim Callaghan's — and Labour's — achievement. □

Micro-electronic and employment revisited: A review, *by R. Kaplinsky*
In this study the author looks at the direct and indirect effects of micro-electronics, and shows how various aspects of the micro-electronics revolution are linked with patterns of employment. He focuses on the effect of new technology on employment and the quality of working life in the industrial countries and in the Third World. Their prospects and problems are examined and the development of their own electronics sectors, as well as the application of new technology in the productive sectors.
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POLITICS

Front lines

Jenny Turner

On Call: Political Essays
JUNE JORDAN *Pluto* £4.50

ON CALL is June Jordan's sixteenth book and her second collection of political essays. At the back it outlines her formidable cv: poetry, architecture, speeches, teaching, campaigns, constant action in many public spheres for black, feminist and international 'activist response to environment'. As much as the strength of the slim volume here, it makes you wonder why her books have never been published in Britain before.

This might have something to do with politics. In *On Call* she is fiercely critical of Israeli foreign policy, which is, as we know, economically and strategically linked to South Africa. The ideological argument connects Zionist fundamentalism to the practice of apartheid: 'It is possible that the slave will become the slaveholder and the victim will become the executioner.' You can see why she has been misread as (and physically attacked for being) anti-Semitic: when it comes to issues of national or racial self-determination, the American left's Rainbow Coalition is (still) liable to fall bitterly apart at the least prod. In *Civil Wars*, an earlier book, Jordan comes out against radical separatist feminism, refusing to take any credit for her own sexual relationships with women and being quite rude about those women who do so without doing anything else; in the American Women's Liberation Movement of the early Seventies, dominated by the *Dialectic of Sex* and *Gyn/Ecology*, this wasn't a popular move.

Jordan argues, and has always argued, that oppressed groups, be they black or Jewish, based on race or gender or class, *do* have rights to home territory. But they bring those rights into being through open debate and political struggle, not by virtue of their blood or guts or soul. In general, these politics lead her to be merciless both to herself and to anyone who dares to be lazy: 'Because my politics devolve from my entire real life, and real phone calls and meetings about real horror or triumph happening to other real people, none of it respects any orthodox anything, any artifice of position or concern.'

It is hard to summarise Jordan's arguments because they come out of contexts and campaigns which, though internationalist, are quite different from those non-American readers will be familiar with. In this respect, the essays on South Africa and Nicaragua are especially important because they show how cushioned, in subtle ways, the white liberal European is in his or her internationalism. Jordan agrees that 'Nicaragua must survive', but then she also pays taxes which support the Contras. A black woman, she is still a tiny cog in a superpower, and is thus less laundered, more compromised and more powerful than us (unless you think about Ireland). While fighting racism in committees and campaigns back home, she reminds her colleagues of the townships' fight against apartheid: 'Can we presume to do less? Do we have less time and fewer resources than they do?' These persistent appeals to popular power are not just rhetorical; the buck *does* stop with the American electorate.

It's also interesting to note how a black American shapes her geography differently. Central America is overland and the West Indies not far away; her childhood nightmare of South Africa Jordan describes as 'a rather small hole of howling white savagery.' 'It could not be beautiful or large or bright or able to grow peaches . . . there could not be people laughing there, or music.' Most white Europeans, I'd imagine, still have a self-hating childhood image of South Africa as the white person's paradisal lido, peaches and all, but guilt makes for religiously over-simple politics. Internationalism is quite different from pan-nationalism, self-determination for all, any old way. It is often contradictory, and involves confusion and compromise. In 'Report from the Bahamas', Jordan writes about a cheap holiday she once took: sun, sand, peaches, the lot. She bought home-crafted souvenirs off black women in the street and had a black chambermaid called Olive. 'We were . . . not women but parties to a transaction designed to set us against one another.' She wonders if there's anything she can say to Olive to make everything okay, and concludes:

> I am reaching for the words to describe the difference between a common identity that has been imposed and the individual identity any one of us will choose, once she gains that chance. That difference is the one that keeps us stupid in the face of new, specific information about somebody else with whom we are supposed to have a connection because a third party, hostile to both of us, has worked it so that the two of us, like it or not, share a common enemy. *What happens between the idea of that enemy and beyond the consequences of that enemy?*

Unlike so many writers, Jordan perceives difference, crucially the difference between partnership in misery (which we know) and partnership through change (yet to come; is the rainbow coalition dialectical enough for this?). In this climate we have, in nice old unReaganite Britain, of frenetic oversimplification of positions on both right and left, it is maybe not surprising she is so often misunderstood. The situational urgency of her style leads her to make leaps which on the one hand prompt sudden insight and reproduce her own 'existential' policy-making but, on the other, at several removes from these specific policies, often have you wishing she'd go a bit slower. She writes as an activist, not a guru, and her work should be grasped to British bosoms not in the manner of heroicising a new black superwoman, but as a useful source of strategy and advice. □

FOOTNOTES

Who needs a **Feminist Book Fortnight**? Feminist fiction has become so successful that mainstream houses cry out for it; women's studies have a regulation slot in academic publishers' catalogues; and the women's presses seem to be flourishing — more so, at least, than such publishing contemporaries as Pluto (rescued by Allison and Busby), Allison and Busby (*possibly* to be rescued by W.H. Allen) and Comedia (rescued by Methuen).

In fact, the fourth Feminst Book Fortnight, which begins on Saturday 6 June*, isn't even meant to be more than a celebratory trade promotion — the fruit, it is true, of perhaps the most important post-war cultural revolution, but fruit that does seem, like an overgrown orange, to have losts its sharpness and flavour.

Still, while the bookshops and libraries promote the Fortnight's star titles, while the media make satisfactory noises (the cash registers ditto), there will also be nearly 100 'events' associated with the Fortnight. And at these readings, talks and discussions, self-congratulation might pause for a moment for self-questioning. Why, it could be asked, despite all the achievements, are Britain's *black* women writers still drowned by the flood of American imports? Or else: has the autobiography/novel lost urgency as a feminist form and grown stale? Or else: has 'feminist' turned into 'women's' — and, if so, does it matter? However tempting in the present climate, it cannot make sense to curl up and doze on our laurels.

Even on the simplest level of 'equality with men', it appears that there's still way to go. One aspect of this is approached by a new publication, **Reviewing the Reviews** (Journeyman, £4.50), compiled by the pressure group Women in Publishing. This is the result of two years' research into the reviews of books by women to appear in the national press — from the 'heavy' daily papers to general, political, women's and literary magazines. The overall conclusion, you'll sigh to hear, is that women authors do worse than men in terms not only of frequency but length and position of review (at least, in every type of publication but the women's magazines).

Given that, of those books published by authors whose name gives a clue to their sex, only 26 per cent are by women, magazines in general (*NS* included) aren't *horribly* unrepresentative. But the national papers seriously need to reconsider their reviewing policy. The *Observer*, the *Guardian*, the *Sunday Times* . . . none of these does as well by its readers as it might.

Reviewing the Reviews would have it that it's their *women* readers they fail. I think they fail both sexes. While women necessarily understand the world, and write about it, differently from men (unless sticking doggedly to man-made formulae), it doesn't follow that only their sisters can enjoy or be stimulated by their books. On the contrary, it's clear to me that the greatest success for any writer is to communicate the most specific, idiosyncratic and truthful vision to the widest audience possible. Women's chance of this, these last 15 years, has increased out of all recognition; too much standing around and clapping could see it shrivel, or rot.

Harriett Gilbert

**Feminist Book Fortnight runs from 6-20 June. For details of events ring 01-402 8159.*

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No easy choices

Steve Platt, London N7
Peter Kellner posed some fascinating moral dilemmas for the politically partisan (*NS* 22 May). I'd like to suggest two more, specifically aimed at partisan journalists such as himself.

- A leading councillor for the party which you are supporting in the forthcoming local elections has been involved in defrauding a community group with which you are connected. You have documentary evidence which proves that this councillor has been involved in disreputable, and quite possibly criminal, behaviour. This doesn't relate in any way to the person's work as a councillor, but if it was exposed it could tip the balance against your favoured party in the council elections. What do you do? Would your answer be any different if this person was a member of another party?

- A leading politician in the party which you are supporting in the forthcoming general election has made very damaging statements — which you have tape-recorded — about the party leader. In the hands of certain national newspapers they could influence the whole course of the election campaign. Do you use your story? Would you use it if the politician concerned was a member of another party speaking about that party's leader?

Peter Kellner's line of argument would seem to offer two, equally morally acceptable, responses. Since, according to Kellner, there are more important things than winning elections, you should, presumably, publish and be damned by the electoral consequences. Democracy is too important to trifle with the tactical considerations. Yet, on the other hand, he also says 'To smear is wrong,' because it 'disfigures democracy'. So you have a ready-made excuse not to do the dirty on the party you support.

Reality, unfortunately, does not lend itself to the easy moral choices posed by Kellner. As a practising journalist, I have recently faced both of the above dilemmas — and decided to resolve them by keeping the relevant information to myself, at least until *after* the elections in question were over. What decided me in the end was not high-minded moral principal so much as a simple gut feeling that had the stories been used it would have been for the wrong reasons — personal or professional gain on my part; partisan, political gain on the part of those who published them.

If the truth was truly sacred, of course, there would be nothing to stop newspaper editors who wanted to use these stories doing so when the relevant elections were over. Somehow, though, that hardly seems a realistic prospect. In an imperfect democracy, therefore, with an imperfect press, we are left only with imperfect choices. That doesn't mean that we shouldn't try to do what is morally right, but it does mean that it's not always so straightforward as Peter Kellner seems to suggest.

Dr Patrick Curry, London W14
Peter Kellner criticises tactical voting without acknowledging that it is a straightforward consequence of our electoral system, which would be completely unnecessary under a truly democratic one. Instead, he urges blind political devotion to a party that moans about tactical voting, but has no intention of changing its cause. More: he has the nerve to cover the Labour Party with the flag of democracy itself, when it actively conspires with the Tories to preserve the old anti-pluralist system intact. This is not merely disingenuous and hypocritical; it points to a rottenness at the core of the Labour Party itself. The general election will pass; but the worm will remain, until it is acknowledged and dealt with.

Anni Marjoram, PPC Devon North
I have watched and read, with growing disbelief, the campaign within the Labour Party for tactical voting. As a PPC in a Tory seat and President of a CLP in an Alliance target seat, I feel that it is time that the voice of thousands of Labour activists in such areas should be heard.

In areas where returning a Labour member is not possible in the immediate future, the main spheres of influence for elected Labour members are Parish, District and City Councils. It is also possible to deliver a clutch of County Council seats. This is not achieved by calls going out from journalistic ivory towers to voters in those areas: it is achieved by the dedication of

Tactial voting: a reply to Peter Kellner

Colin Crouch, Fellow and Tutor in Politics at Trinity College, Oxford, member of steering committee of TV '87
In TV '87, the tactical voting campaign to stop Thatcher's third term, we are accustomed to the charge of defeatism because we assume that neither Labour nor the Alliance can alone secure an overall majority. It is therefore a great pleasure to rebuke Peter Kellner's criticism of us (*NS* 22 May) for its pessimism.

For Kellner, Thatcher's victory is assured. He is fighting for Labour's place in the Opposition, ready for the next time round. and he sees the election as a metaphysical device for defiantly asserting besieged values; he has given up on the task of choosing a real live Parliament and government. He is distressed that Labour supporters voting tactically for the Alliance would in some abstract way be aligning themselves with some policies that they dislike; but he does not care a fig that by voting Labour in certain constituencies they may be guaranteeing the survival of Thatcher's government and the far worse real-world policies that it embodies.

For TV '87 this election is about stopping Thatcherism *now*, not whistling in the dark until 1991. And, rather than exaggerate the differences among the Labour, Alliance, Scottish and Welsh Nationalist parties, we rejoice in the fact that the parties representing the majority of British people stand firm for the universal welfare state, the pursuit of full employment and against the erosion of freedom that has proceeded under this government.

Peter Kellner makes much of the compromises with principle that he claims tactical voting implies. In doing so he assumes that political parties are the embodiments of coherent philosophies, such that to accept one part of their programme is to accept all. This is clearly false. In this election Labour will gain if millions of voters overlook its unilateral defence policy because they support its stand on the welfare state and economic policy. Peter Kellner was in his turn required to swallow his principles in all elections before 1983 when Labour was multilateralist.

Any serious political party is a glorious amalgam of factional compromises, inconsistencies and disparate elements. Rigorous philosophical coherence is found only on the minoritarian fringe. People who find that the particular bundle put together by a major party always corresponds closely to their own preferences are lucky indeed. They are also moral chameleons, their principles shifting as the factional balance or needs of the times lead their party to change its line.

The approach to ideals embodied in tactical voting is only an extension of that of ordinary voting: we make the best we can of what is on offer. Tactical voting is distinctive in crossing boundaries, not of principle, but of party organisations. It is the tragedy of the 1980s that organisational divisions have enabled a radical and ruthless politics that offends the principles of the majority of British people to dominate us. It is indeed to *assert* these principles that many people are now contemplating temporarily crossing the organisational boundary.

Kellner ended his article with a desperate attempt to save Richmond, Bath and Chelmsford for the Tories by appealing to the need to keep Labour's share of the popular vote as high as possible. (A tricky argument for Labour; it leads quite quickly to support for proportional representation.) But he grossly over-estimates the danger. Labour amasses its vote in its safe seats and those where it comes second. TV '87 is concerned only with the numerically small votes where the party comes an unambiguous third. Even if we are enormously successful and as much as half the Labour vote in every one of our target seats goes tactical, that would still amount to only two per cent of the national vote. And every Alliance supporter who votes tactically for Labour offsets one of those votes.

If TV '87 is successful we should also *reduce* the amount of wrong-headed tactical voting — of ill-informed Labour or Alliance supporters who erroneously think that in their constituency they should vote for the other party. Ignorance of which party is strong in particular seats is woefully widespread. Peter Kellner, who writes such a passionate defence of the value of voting, should at least give us one cheer for trying to help voters know what their vote is likely to achieve.

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thousands of Labour Party and trade union members working and organising very hard, sometimes having had to wait for years for their work to bear fruit.

There are large tracts of this country that do not have historical links with the labour and trade union movement. In such places electors have no direct experience of living under socialism. Even when a Labour government has been in office, the effects of such a government have had to pass through local layers of Tory/Liberal rule.

Labour members in such areas have also been under threat from the Liberal/SDP machine for a long time. They are the people who have witnessed at first hand the awfulness of the Liberals/SDP. What the call for tactical voting means for such members of the party is the total negation of all they have struggled to achieve. What is being said is this:

- Never mind the street collections, stalls and petitions.
- Forget the miles of shoe leather on unfriendly territory canvassing.
- Shame about all the public meetings painstakingly organised to raise awareness of issues from the miners' strike to the American bombing of Libya.
- Tough that the Chernobyl accident has persuaded hundreds of people in normally Tory/SDP/Liberal wards that the Labour Party policy on dismantling nuclear power is the only sensible power policy.
- Ignore all the painful times that (sometimes solitary) Labour members on school governing bodies and local area health authorities have spoken out and made such bodies discuss the real issues and have them minuted.
- Sweep away the hours spent shifting public attitudes to nuclear weapons.

That is what tactical voting means for the builders of a grassroots labour and trade union movement.

We then come to the problem of what tactical voting requires us to say to the voter. We are asked to tell the electorate that we want them to vote for candidates who do not support the removal of all nuclear weapons or the dismantling of nuclear power. The labour movement is also being asked to knock on doors and suggest that we elect MPs who are going to be anti-trade union in a way that is only slightly paler than this present Tory government.

Those of us who have had to live with the shambles of hung councils are now supposed to propose that this is the shape of the next Parliament. In such a scenario David Owen will keep the Tories in government just as Liberal/SDP members have supported Tories in hung councils. That is the real scene, the Alliance in alliance with the Tories. The real call for tactical voting is for Labour candidates to be defeated. We saw this in Greenwich and if the call for tactical voting is listened to, we will see that repeated all over the country.

Selection and reselection procedures have meant that the make-up of the PLP which has been white, male, middle-class and right of centre is slowly changing. The policies of a non-nuclear Britain and accountability of the state pose a threat to the British establishment. There are enormous vested interests which are now gathering together to destabilise the labour and trade union movement, because in some policy areas at least, the labour movement threatens, quite rightly, to start behaving, as it should have done years ago, as a socialist party putting forward socialist policies. These interests now include Professor Hobsbawm, the *New Statesman*, *Marxism Today* and the editor of *New Socialist*, Stuart Weir. There is only one way to defeat Margaret Thatcher and the Tories, that is to vote Labour wherever we live and ensure the election of a Labour government.

Exeter for Labour

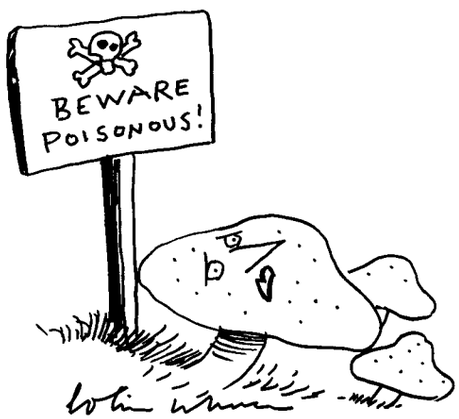
John & Jenny Lloyd, Exeter

Exeter is a Labour chance, not Alliance as claimed in the TV 87 list (*NS* 22 May). The last City-wide elections (in May 1985) produced the following votes:

Conservative	12,509
Labour	11,174
Alliance	10,494

The City Council, which is elected by thirds, reflects Labour's strength over a longer time, even after losing two seats this May: Conservatives 15, Labour 13, Alliance 7.

I presume that TV 87 base their prediction on the 1983 general election. But that was the first time since 1931 that Labour were not first or second. If their other advice is as badly researched as the case of Exeter, their campaign can have no credibility.



Fungicide

Harry Adam Knight, c/o Star Books, W.H. Allen & Co, London W1

As the author of the work, *The Fungus*, that has been the subject of discussion by two of your correspondents recently (Letters 15 & 22 May), I feel obliged to stress that the novel was *not* meant to be a metaphor for Mrs Thatcher and her economic policies. As a strong supporter of Mrs Thatcher I resent the implication very much and suspect that this peculiar interpretation of my book by John Brosnan was his idea of a joke. And a pretty poor one at that.

Record on Scargill

Peggy Kahn, Michigan, USA

I would like to correct the record of my discussion with your interviewer and clarify the tenor of my comments in your article on the miners' union, 'Anger is not enough' (*NS* 3 April).

First, as you report, I stressed the terribly difficult political and economic conditions in which the miners were forced into a strike. I also stressed the difficulties created by the regionalisation of the coalfield and union. My view is not that the trauma and defeats of the strike are attributable to Arthur Scargill personally, though I did suggest that Scargill played an important role in national decision-making about the strike and that there was a personalist regime in the national office which predated the strike itself.

Secondly, I declined to make judgements about current issues in the coalfield and did not declare that 'Scargill's strategy cannot survive outside Yorkshire'. The point I made was that Scargill has been deeply formed by the traditions of the Yorkshire area and may sometimes presume that similar social and cultural conditions prevail in other areas of the coalfield.

Rural vote

Geoff Thompson, Fiscal Measures towards Land Reform, London SE27

In a review of *This Land is Our Land* (*NS* 22 May) Fraser Harrison writes that Marion Shoard's proposals (rural land tax; change in laws of trespass, and planning) stand no chance of being realised without a greatly strengthened Labour Party.

But please consider: they could be the *very means* of strengthening a Labour Party. Skilfully presented, they could offer a majority of voters in rural areas (for a start) something at last evidently worth voting for.

Campaign videos

Frank Gray & Tom Hickmore, Brighton

We're glad to announce to Ian Penman (*NS* 22 May) that video is not silent in Brighton during this election. Over 20 copies of a campaign videotape for the local Labour Party entitled, 'You Can Decide Brighton's Future', are now in circulation. The 26-minute version has been and will continue to be shown at ward meetings, street parties, colleges, sheltered homes and pubs. It is also available for free hire or sale from two bookshops and the Peace Shop. The 5-minute 'club mix' is in frequent use at a number of nightclubs. In a town where there is a straight contest between Labour and the Tories, this new and experimental initiative should help to bring us the victories for socialism which we are need.

Green thoughts

Steve Dawe, Green Party PPC for Canterbury

The 1983 Labour Manifesto was undeniably a radical document which, despite flaws, represented the thinking and interests of the coalition which Labour defends. By contrast, the 1987 manifesto could well have been written in 1967.

As examples, how long is 'gradually' with regard to diminishing dependence on nuclear power? What 'good environmental practices'

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will be used in agriculture? Without specifics, later commitments on environmental protection lack a context, and therefore credibility. Similarly, what controls will be applied to control large companies to prevent further pollution creation and force them to pay for cleaning up the mess they have created?

The 'Priority Programme' section ends in an assertion that we have to 'increase our world trade share'. At whose expense? The assumption that increasing our participation in trade actually improves our economic position is highly debatable. This certainly hasn't been the case in most of Latin America, in part because of the absence of effective policies of wealth redistribution: another area on which the manifesto is rather quiet. Since 1973, our economy has experienced both growth and rising unemployment. Worldwide overcapacity in various sectors of manufacturing necessitates trade co-operation rather than competition. Or will a Labour government seek to compete with well-known socialist paradises like Taiwan, South Korea and Hong Kong? If not, where are the commitments in the manifesto to reduce unnecessary trade, to withdraw from the European Community and expand sustainable, import-substituting, low-cost areas of work? The security of our economic and welfare systems is not just threatened by the scythe of Thatcherism, it is also at risk as North Sea oil fails to provide a cushion against political failure. The decline of oil gets a mention in the manifesto, but not an effective response.

Independent education

D. J. Woodhead, Director, Independent Schools Information Services

Think of a number and double it seems to be the basis on which you concocted your statistics on independent education (*NS* 15 May).

The alleged 'subsidy' of £600 million is ludicrous. You ignore the fact that parents who send their children to independent schools pay their rates and taxes. They therefore help to pay for the training of all teachers — in both maintained and independent sectors. This nonsense alone accounts for more than half of the £600 million.

Your other figures are also wrong. The Assisted Places Scheme costs £34 million, not £49 million, and money would have to be spent anyway providing places for those pupils in maintained schools. The charitable status benefits are worth £30 million, not £60 million, and are more than repaid to families in bursaries and scholarships. Local authorities spend £33 million, not £80 million, and these places often cost less than if the local authorities had to provide them. Boarding places for armed forces and diplomatic families cost £75 million, not £100 million, and would otherwise have to be provided by the state at equivalent running cost and much greater capital cost.

Your figure of £600 million therefore comes down to £172 million. But even this is excessive because of the costs which the state would incur if it had to provide the facilities currently available in the independent sector.

Independent schools neither need nor ask for 'subsidies'. Assisted places schools, for example, could fill those places with full fee-payers if the AP scheme did not exist. They welcome the scheme because, like charitable status, it widens access to independent schools and extends parental choice.

The real 'subsidy' is the saving to the state of not having to educate 550,000 children while collecting rates and taxes from all those parents who are paying twice for education. That's a saving of £750 million. If state education is underfunded, how much worse would its underfunding be if it had to bear the cost of another half a million pupils?

Liberal correction

Dylan Harris, Young Liberal Returning Officer, Egham, Surrey

As Young Liberal Returning Officer I must correct Andy Reynolds letter (*NS* 22 May). The Political Vice-Chair of the Young Liberals is Paul Wiggin, not, as he claims, Andy Reynolds. The Chair of the Young Liberals is Rachael Pitchford, not, as printed, Felix Dodds (who is too old to be a member, anyway). Following complaints and a detailed investigation into the elections, I found no evidence that any of the elected officers were involved in 'serious electoral irregularities'.

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BEAUTIFUL ORIENTAL Girls wish to contact gentlemen for friendship, love and marriage. Please send s.a.e. for further details of this serious programme to: Miss S. Ounban, P.O. Box 39, Reigate, Surrey RH2 8YX. W7.16

CAN ANYONE convince this lively, interesting, sensitive, balanced, male journalist interested in people, laughing, travel etc. that there are still warm, slim, intelligent, humorous, unattached women (under 38) left in London. Or am I asking too much! Tel. photo please. Box (23)5048. W23.13

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CHINESE JOURNALIST 30s, good-looking and kind, seeks sympathetic, socialist lady for summer fun and laughter, amidst serious pursuits. C. London. Phone no please. Box (23)5023. W23.14

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DRAWING DOWN THE MOON — the alternative introduction agency for thinking people. Personal attention. Choose your own contacts. 7-11 Kensington High Street, W8. Phone Mary Balfour on 01-938 1721. W13.20

EAST CENTRAL SCOTLAND: male graduate (30), newly arrived in Fife seeks female companion sharing interest in getting from theatre to pub before closing time. Box (23)5037. W23.16

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EXCEPTIONAL MAN WANTED – warm, lively, slight, clever – in touch with his feelings & his body, who feels good about being seen & heard, touching, dancing, massage, walking in wild places (or becoming that way). Wishful thinking? I'm 45, warm, independent, daring, generous, loving, choosy and still learning. Never tried this before, but if you're a man who understands my words we could explore the possibilities. Photo essential. London/South. Box (23)5020. W23.18

FEMININE, ATTRACTIVE woman of warmth and vitality. Youthful, serene, mid-forties. Loves Victorian lace, wild flowers, mountains, sunsets, old churchyards, travel, cultural pursuits, homelife, gardening, swimming, walking, long leisurely lunches for two, canal cruising. Now seeks the companionship and closeness of a loving, caring man. Box (23)5025. W23.19

FRIENDLY FEMALE seeks companion/lover. I am intelligent, superficially self-sufficient, with standard interests, typical values (honesty, kindness, sensitivity), tall, forties. Central England but mobile. Box (23)5049. W23.20

HELP! Journalist writing non-sneery article about Lonely Hearts for quality paper needs your answers. Does advertising help? Why is finding Mr/Ms Right so hard? Who advertises, who replies? Etc. Anonymity assured. Box (23)5033. W23.21

INTELLIGENT, CREATIVE attractive woman, 40, seeks sensitive, active, older male. Sense of humour essential. Likes: literature, films, walking, talking. Photo and phone no. please. Box (23)5046. W23.22

INTERESTING & ORIGINAL graduate woman teacher, 40s, divorced, seeks warm friendship with professional man. Interests: home, family, countryside, nature. Central London home. Box (22)5000. W22.6

ISLINGTON WOMAN, 40, student, tough as old boots, seeks tall, caring, humorous man to look after marshmallow bits. Interests: wool gathering, opera, dogs, being happy, veggie food. Box (23)5027. W23.23

LADY, 39, slim, attractive, intelligent, non-smoker, enjoys life. Independent, secure, yet lonely. Seeks serious, professional man, with NS ideals, for shared, caring relationship. South Yorkshire/Derbyshire. No philanderers. Box (23)5029. W23.24

MALE, 24, introvert, likes: good food, travel, music (not discos), walking, left-wing but inactive. Would like to meet sincere girl for genuine friendship. London. Box (23)5036. W23.25

MAN SEEKS WOMAN. 'Spirituality' — whatever that means — seems as important to me as politics and art. Me? Intelligent, hill-walker, non-sexist; wine, most musics lover. Box (20)4938. W20.18

OLD FRIENDS: an introduction agency for the over forties. Loneliness is not inevitable. Details from: Anne Brent, 18a Highbury New Park, London N5 2DB. 01-226 5432. N15.31

PROFESSIONAL MALE mid-30s, would like to meet female 22-35, for evenings out & possible relationship. Cardiff/Bridgend/Swansea. Box (23)5051. W23.26

RECENT LANCASTRIAN although Yorkist sympathies male 32. Interests: music especially Mozart, hill-walking, theatre, cricket. Warm, intelligent, socialist seeks caring female for friendship and outings — Liverpool — Manchester area. Box (22)4992. W22.11

RETIRED FARMER and author would like to share his attractive home and garden in the Home Counties with a lady. Car driver essential, dog welcome, left wing politics not necessary! Might best suit someone with plenty of hobbies as he has family around and many interests of his own. Marvellous daily help sees to all the housework. Box (23)5021. W23.27

MUSIC LOVING WOMAN, likes good books, films etc., serious but with sense of humour and cosmopolitan outlook, seeks kind, intelligent, creative man, preferably under 50, non-smoker. Box (23)5024. W23.28

SHY LADY – 50s, North West, seeks strong, intelligent, sympathetic companion. Mary Evans had Lewes – Collette had Willie – et pour moi? Box (23)5028. W23.29

SE LONDON: bisexual male, 31, handsome, amiable, educated, professional, varied interests, seeks woman, similar, 22-35 for friendship, theatre etc., possibly marriage. Box (22)4998. W22.12

SOUTHERN MALE, 40 – independent though sometimes lonesome, considerate yet rather self-centred, hard working but basically idle, both peaceable and obdurate – seeks similarly confused female for company this summer and beyond. Box (23)5030. W23.30

STUDY HOLIDAY: intelligent, intellectually inquisitive woman car driver, perhaps German-speaking, sought by London architect (54), for 2-week observational socio-research study tour of towns Holland/Germany/Denmark late July-early Sept. Minimal expenses contributions. Box (23)5054. W23.31

TALL, ATTRACTIVE, intelligent woman, 41, likes cycling, with literary and artistic inclinations, seeks similar male for outings/companionship. Added bonuses would be a beard and the ability to make me laugh. Photo and reasonably comprehensive self-portrait please. London. Box (23)5019. W23.32

UNIVERSITY LECTURER, gentleman, warm, affectionate, interests include: music, theatre, politics, cycling, vegetarian food, seeks warm, affectionate, good looking, unattached, under 37 lady, for lasting relationship. Oxford/London area. Letter, tel. please. Box (23)5032. W23.33

USA: Live-in lady companion (slim), sought by a lecturer, Asian, 41, 5' 10", slim, easy-going. Europe educated. Photo please. Box (23)5034. W23.34

WARM, THOUGHTFUL woman, 32, caring profession — enjoys: people, communication, walking, travel, the arts — seeks sensitive, open, intelligent man for enjoyable relationship. Oxford area. Box (21)4979. W21.26

WEEKENDS IN BRIGHTON? Male, 48, tall, slim, solvent, easy-going, house/car, Sussex coast – interests: classical music/travel/countryside – seeks fertile female for whatever ensues. Box (23)5016. W23.35

WEST INDIAN Postgraduate scholar based in London but travel around Britain, seeks female friends under 45 for companionship. Hobbies are theatre, tennis and the countryside. Box (23)5050. W23.36

WOMAN, 32, warm-hearted, humorous, likes the arts, travel, having fun, being quiet sometimes; seeks man, 27-36, unattached, funny, intelligent and kind (reasonably!). Bristol/London. Box (23)5041. W23.37

WOMAN, 39, socialist, likes smoking, drinking, eating, jazz, friends, her 3 children. Seeks kind man for fun/love/friendship. Box (23)5022. W23.38

WOMAN, 46, (London and Southeast). Loves countryside, trees, Eliot, Sibelius, writing – and many other good things. Seeks man (45-55?) to share feelings, warmth and enjoyments. Box (23)5026. W23.39

WOMAN, YOUNG 40s, seeks sensitive, non-smoking man who enjoys music, the countryside and travel, is socially concerned and interested in personal and spiritual growth. Box (23)5017. W23.40

WOULD ANY tall, cultivated, professional gentleman care to meet sexy lady 60+ for occasional companionship London/Wiltshire. Interests: theatre, travel, arts, sex. Box (23)5055. W23.41

PERSONAL

UNATTACHED AND OVER 40? Dinner date for a different way of meeting people. Details: 01-994 4655. W23.5

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Theatre

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ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY 01-638 8891. **BARBICAN THEATRE: MACBETH** 5-9 June. **RICHARD II** 10-16 June. **ROMEO & JULIET** 17-18 June.
THE PIT: COUNTRY DANCING by Nigel Williams 5-9 June. **WORLDS APART** by José Triana 10-16 June. **SARCOPHAGUS** by Vladimir Gubaryev 7-18 June.
MERMAID THEATRE: 01-236 5568 **THE FAIR MAID OF THE WEST** by Thomas Heywood 5-9 June.
THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN by Shakespeare and Fletcher 10-16 June. **EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR** by Ben Jonson 17-18 June.

BLOOMSBURY THEATRE 01-387 9629. Fri & Sat 7pm **Trinity College Opera THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO** (in English) Tickets £4, concs £2.

Folklore Festival

SPECTACULAR FOLKLORE FESTIVAL in Bulgaria 10-19 August at Rozhen Rhodope Mountains. Band of 300 bag-pipers, dance, song, music, crafts. From Heathrow, fullboard, excursions. Price £368 children 6-12 £286. Also dance & music course £20 extra. Places limited. Contact immediately British-Bulgarian Friendship Society, 69 Upper Street, London N1 0NY (tel 01-359 0507) or Bulgarian Tourist Office (01-499 6988).

AGENDA

FOR DETAILS CALL JANET BANKS 01-739 1645

Deadline: 2pm Mondays

CAMPAIGN

DEPRESSED BY THE OPINION POLLS? Tactical Voting can deny the Thatcher Government a third term. Help TV 87 to inform voters (Alliance & Labour) how to make their votes count. Send donation to Tactical Voting, 61 Sotheby Road, London N5 2UP. (Send s.a.e. for information about campaign or ring 01-354 0823).

SAT 13 JUNE

THE AFTERMATH OF DISASTER: SURVIVAL & LOSS. Tavistock Clinic, 120 Belsize Lane, NW3. Tickets £10 in advance. Multi-disciplinary One-Day Conference; distinguished speakers; group discussion. Details: Jocelyn Gamble 01-435 7111.

IN FRONT OF THE CHILDREN
British Film Institute Summer School
25-31 July, 1987

In Front of the Children will take place at the University of Stirling. Commissioned papers will be presented and there will be film and video screenings and consultation with panels of experts. Discussions will be held in seminar groups and there will be time for reading.

How children watch television needs to be thought about anew as broadcasting technologies and policies shape up for the nineties. Preparation for the changing circumstances in our viewing habits and in television's international distribution and circulation needs to be made so that parents and children, teachers and researchers can make informed interventions.

The 1987 BFI Summer School, **In Front of the Children,** will investigate:

- *how television's futures look from the vantage point of the 1980s*
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- *how variously children understand and read television programmes.*

For further information and details contact: **Tana Wollen or Alpa Patel BFI Education, 81 Dean Street, London W1V 6AA. Telephone 01-437 4355.**

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BACKCHAT

INFRA DIG

Iron in the soul

Diana Eden

THERE ARE TWO political issues which have consistently engaged my interest: namely, what is Margaret Thatcher *on* and, whatever it is, can I get it over the counter at my local chemist? After the Brighton bombing there she was at matins, crisply ironed, squeaky clean, no ruffled lock amid the carefully starched coiffure. Clearly, even nerves lack the nerve to invade that spooky self-possession. Nor, remembering that she made the decision to sink *The Belgrano* and then went off and *ate her lunch*, can she be martyr to gastric upset. She probably assumes Alka Seltzer is a senior advisor at The White House.

A political correspondent whose current brief it is 'to cover Thatcher' (the phrase evokes surrealistic thought) told me that, having watched her matinée performances on many a tricky Tuesday and Thursday, he felt grudging admiration. There she stands, he said, by the dispatch box, a woman who, ten years ago, was not regarded with distilled devotion by the Grandees of her party, a physically small woman of no outstanding vocal or gesticulatory talent, and yet she regularly sees off several hundred baying men.

I now turn, abruptly, with no small measure of relief and a large amount of reason, from the sinister phenomenon of Thatcher to my longtime hero, Michael Foot. The reason is to satisfy and, please God, to silence the Books and Arts ed. of this journal, who has hissingly instructed me 'to start to drop some names'. If you think Thatcher is formidable then you should meet the Books and Arts ed., so it is terror which impels me to reveal that I spent a recent Saturday scoffing supper with Michael Foot and the equally endearing Freddie Ayer. As our host, Ted Honderich, is the wittiest philosopher ever to have fled Toronto, you may understand the gathering contrasted sharply with my usual Saturday soirées in The Balham Burger Bar (soirées about which, curiously, the Books and Arts ed. wishes to hear nothing whatsoever).

What these intellectual giants have in common, besides the unarguable good fortune, now, of knowing me, is that they represent the human and good humoured face of brain power. I would recommend Ayer's autobiography as an entertaining read even to those who feel that time spent contemplating Probability could be better spent addressing Certainty and getting emigration papers in order by the eleventh of this month. For A.J. Ayer is an astonishing and amusing owner-up whose book, like his conversation, is scattered with warm, confessional charm.

Perhaps this quality is common only to fine and liberal minds. The autobiography of another of my heroes, J.K. Galbraith (and the instant I have supper in *his* company you'll be hearing that I had supper in his company), records his first day as an agricultural student: 'I was given as a roommate a charming man, rather older than I, named Sydney House. He listened to my personal history and my political views through a long evening and promptly applied for a change. My next roommate lasted until Christmas.' Impossible to imagine a Thatcher composing self-deprecating quips or admitting to pomposity and ill-conceived ideals.

But the Galbraiths, Foots and Ayers no longer can be said to typify the national characteristics of their countries. Britain, certainly, is a self-important, bullying little nation (see Falklands War for details), aptly represented by the small and shrill headmistress of a dame school wagging her admonishing finger at the world. The only other political issue which engages my attention is whether or not a depressingly adequate number of voters will once again find little quarrel with this image. □

"Remind me once more Miss Spindwell — what's my raison d'être?"

FOOD

Raised pulses

Colin Spencer

A QUARTER TIN of baked beans is eaten, on average, per person per week. And yet we eat only half an ounce per week of the dried, uncanned beans. A great pity, for beans are an essential part of the staple diet of the world and one of the healthiest foods, high in dietary fibre, protein and minerals, low in saturated fat.

Canned baked beans, on the other hand, contain an unnecessary amount of sugar — 5 per cent — and, though they are popular with children, it would be wise for parents to choose a sugar-free brand. Every year, each one of us consumes a frightening 100 lbs of sugar, and processed food is one of the culprits, with hidden amounts of added sugar we often are too busy to track down and recognise on the label.

Now that we are about to enter the summer months, when we can buy and grow fresh peas and beans, some of the most attractive and appetising salads are a mixture of dried pulses and fresh legumes. The mixture works in almost any variety of ways that you can dream up.

Here are a few suggestions: 1) brown or green lentils with peas; 2) black beans, peas and mangetouts; 3) red kidney beans, haricot beans and broad beans; 4) black eyed beans and French beans; 5) azuki beans and runner beans. There is a myth that dried beans need soaking overnight. If you pour boiling water over the beans, they will

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swell up in about an hour and you can start cooking with them immediately.

About five years ago, it was discovered that kidney beans were toxic if uncooked. Amazingly enough, some people had misread the recipe instructions on bean salads, soaked the beans and then tossed them uncooked in a dressing. Luckily, so the rumour goes, the buffet party at which they were served was at a nurses' home within a hospital, so no one died from the effects. But the scare was on.

Phaseolus vulgaris is the botanical name for the species and the toxin. It is increased by cooking for a long time at a low temperature, so a bean casserole made in a slow cooker would be highly dangerous. The toxin is killed by high temperature; a ten minute fast boil then throw away the water does the trick. (Red kidney beans have the most toxin, but all the haricot family needs this treatment.)

Interesting to note that the Bulgarian broadcaster, Georgy Markov, was killed by a similar poison (administered via an injection from an umbrella tip) derived from the caster oil bean. The irony is that, though every cookery writer incorporated the ten-minute-fast-boil warning in their recipes when the scare was on, most seem to have now forgotten the danger. But the toxin of yesterday is still potent today.

This recipe preface is hardly the thing to set the salivary glands going but remember, all foods are toxic in a minute degree; it is not only lampreys you die from a surfeit of. Try not to let this put you off the bean salads below. All recipes serve four.

New Potato, Borlotti and French Bean Salad

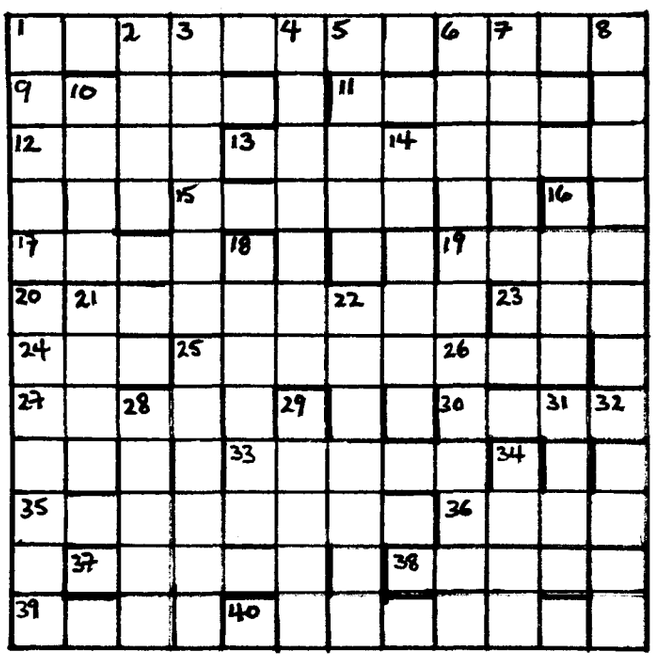
1lb (450g) new potatoes, small
Sprig of rosemary and thyme
6oz (170g) borlotti beans, soaked
1lb (450g) French beans
1 large onion, finely sliced
3 tablespoon olive oil
Juice and zest of one lemon
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
Generous handful of mint, finely chopped.

Drain the soaked beans. Add fresh water, bring to the boil, cook for 10 minutes, throw the water away. Add new water, bring to the boil with the rosemary and thyme and simmer for an hour or until tender. Discard the herbs. Scrub the potatoes and cook them in a little salted water for 20 minutes. Trim and halve the French beans, steam or boil them until tender but make sure they are still *al dente*. Mix the oil, lemon and seasoning together in a bowl, add the sliced onion, then all three well-drained vegetables (if the potatoes are larger than teaspoon size, halve them). Toss thoroughly, add the mint. Serve warm or chilled.

Salamanca 121

'Gimmericks'

PRIZES: £12 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 121, New Statesman, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8BA, by first post 29 June.



Our 1D(5) who've 6D(6) *must* 30(4) Frank,
Whose 5(6) were never in 32(5);
When his 20(7) said, '*Why* do
You not even 25D(6)?',
He said, 'I just don't have the 40(8)!'

Unchecked letters in the above are CCCHILPTTTT. Each line of the other four limericks contains a definition and hidden jumble of the required answer, either coming first, never overlapping — but in two lines of each limerick (part of) the true definition is replaced by a rhyming word, these two definitions being homophones. Half the downs clue a word which rhymes with the answer required, the true definition a word hidden in the clue (indicated second). Unchecked letters in these are BDHLMPRS.

1(8) 'My last supervisor,' said Shaw,
6(4) 'Was just never afraid of his jaw.
9(5) He's roar a whole load
11(5) Of hot air, like Old Toad,
12(4) And — I think you'll agree — what a bore!'

13(8) A Dormobile trader called Gold
15(5) Kept a nymph, sheep, and horse in the hold:
17(4) The vet said, 'There's no glut
19(4) The times all doors are shut,
21(8) For the spare doubles up as a fold!'

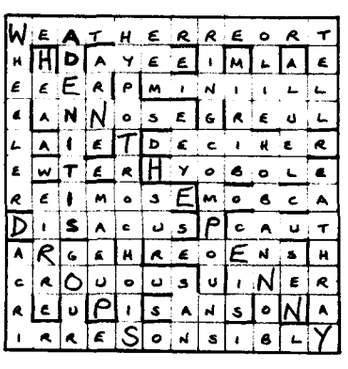
23(3) A wine-loving monk, Brother Paul,
24(3) Would work drunkenly when you might fall,
25(8) He'd smash a bare keg
27(4) For a gen. fino peg . . .
33(5) And the good man missed Matins and all!

35(8) A hermetic thinker, called Dwight,
36(4) Thought the Pyramids showed a King's sight,
37(5) Not for their stone piles
38(5) Or those fancy-seared miles,
39(4) But their three-sided visionary height!

DOWN

2 Sprung snare is still shortening the distance (5)(5)
4 When it's late devour avidly with lowest resistance (7)
5 Foreign parent to talk unclearly (6)(5)
7 Who feels ill when drunkenly I relax — nearly (5)
8 He upset ye burds? (7)
10 Senile 'orrid witch (i.e. flying) another engirds (4)(5)
14 Rice (on TV) prepared by a man, Ken (not married) (6)
16 These ancient shows could be note, live, being carried (5)(3)
18 Geometrical corollary showing endless promise when tested (6)
21 What's magical (in kit of conjuror), dark, old, finally rested (4)(4)
22 A tilt, vigorous, one time writ (7)
26 Sailor in stormy sea having the look of one who can't comprehend it? (6)
28 On first view of prima -----, one in front is found (5)
29 More pleasant coiner perhaps dropping round (5)(4)
31 Game, hard one, which has leading Mohammedan certainly outside (5)(6)
34 Bird-owner's lost ring, coming untied (4)(3)

Solution to Salamanca 120



Prizewinners to Salamanca 120

Myra Stokes
(Clifton, Bristol)

F. Foxcroft
(Rochdale, Lancs.)

Bill Anderson
(London, W6)

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Black-Eyed Bean, Lentil and Pea Salad
6oz (170g) black-eyed beans, soaked
6oz (170g) brown lentils
½lb (225g) peas, podded or frozen
2 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 tablespoon Balsamic vinegar
2 cloves garlic , crushed
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

Cook the beans with the same procedure as the borlotti beans above. Boil the brown lentils for 10-12 minutes, so that they are still a little crunchy. Cook the peas in a little salted water, drain and mix the beans, lentils and peas together with the rest of the ingredients in a bowl.

Broad Bean, Pasta and Chick Pea Salad
1 lb (450g) broad beans in the pod, or:
½ lb (225g) broad beans, frozen
6 oz (170g) pasta shapes — wholemeal wheatears, bows, cocks combs, wheels, twists or shells.
6 oz (170g) chick peas
3 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
1 tablespoon whole grain mustard
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
Generous handful of parsley, mint and chives, mixed and finely chopped.

Cook the chick peas in plenty of water until tender — generally, all of two hours. Cook the broad beans and the pasta. Drain all the vegetables carefully. Mix the oil, vinegar and mustard together, with the seasoning; toss the vegetables thoroughly and finally add the herbs. Leave for a few hours before serving.

Weekend competition

No 2978 **Set by Russell Lucas**

Fools rush in . . . Yes, once again, we appear to be begging for the worst you can offer in the way of vulgarity and sexism. But could you just *try* to resist temptation? What we want are skipping or counting rhymes devised to provide a *socially useful* sex education for our children. Okay? Max 12 lines by 17 June.

No 2975 **Set by Tim Hopkins**

Shakespeare's plays re-written as Shakespearean sonnets.

Report **By Babe Bio**

Your orl so good at this sort of thing — as Gray would pronounce (if he wasn't so bisy fermenting revolushon on some poor Greek iland), old Bill is probably the yungest poet most of you have ever red — that, as I was saying, I almost fell asleep with *bor-or-or-dom* at your competence. So congrachulashons to two of you who did at least keep me awaik: Bill S., by trying to pass off the Chorus's opening to *Romeo and Juliet*; and Noel Petty with a really injeanious sonnet version of *Richard II* (I think it'd work well on radio, Noel). But prizes, twelve quid, to just four of you — and perhaps we'll give William a few munths' rest.

When something's rotten in the Danish state,
And ghosts appear upon the battlements,
And Hamlet, sadly torn 'twixt love and hate,
Speaks whirling words with surreptitious sense,
Then comes calamity, a lightning-cloud:
Polonius and his daughter are consigned
To death and madness, while the prince aloud
Debates revenge with his divided mind.
As plot and counter-plot engender fast,
The guilty, lustful king resolves to end
His heir-apparent's life; but at the last
The fatal scheme rebounds and deaths impend
For half the Danish court. Like Barnes and Ewings,
These families have overdone their screwings.

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

The fair Bianca has a sister, Kate,
A fiery and unmarriageable scold;
Their father has decreed Bianca's fate:
Permission for her wedding he'll withold
Until the day that they can find a beau
For waspish Kate — a hope that seems forlorn;
Then from Verona comes Petruchio,
Who, more by dowry than by beauty drawn,
Lays lusty siege to this notorious jade;
He woos and wins in scenes of comic strife,
Turning a loud-mouthed minx to suppliant maid,
A hell-cat to a meek, submissive wife.
Dost think this is a wondrous sight to see?
'Tis only on the stage such things can be.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

My mistress' hands are nothing like the sun,
Like to the rose the spots that lie there thickly.
With gall for milk why then her breasts are dun;
And when 'twas done 'twas indeed done well and quickly:
By spirits that tend on mortal thoughts unsex'd,
She screwed my courage to the sticking-place;
With Duncan's surcease I then caught success,
(His silver skin with golden blood well laced).
At night when goes my dearest chuck sleep-walking,
To wash her hands with perfumes from Arabia,
I to the heath to meet with old Graymalkins,
Who made me not so happy, yet much happier:
Yet by Hecate, I think my love as foul and fair
As any beldam in the fog and filthy air.

DENNIS MACBETH

When Lear, a loopy monarch turning 80,
Dictates his will, his daughters go bananas.
Cordelia keeps cool, her reasons weighty;
The elder pair come on like fresh piranhas.
With Kent and Cordie exiled, Lear, too foolish,
Goes guesting with his jester, gets a V-sign.
And Gloucester's bastard — this is pretty ghoulish —
Gets daddy blinded. All is internecine.
The better boy, one Edgar, feigning crazy,
Meets Kent returned. They help Lear go to Dover.
Lear speechifies, and wears the local daisy;
The bastard beats him, Cordie's hanged. It's over?
Sororicide; and suicide; a duel.
So: might young Edgar bring about renewal?

WILL BELLENGER

Iago's Sonnet

I stood in his black shadow, was content
To let him come between me and the sun,
But Cassio as well? Well, my intent
Behind a double blind may safely run.
Besides, he's dazzled now, lost in the hot
Fresh splendour of his bed his bride adorns
So virtuous. She may be or may not.
A black beast and a white! Goats should have horns!
'If you, then Cassio, then anyone!'
— Planted in darkness, feeding on the night,
Cassio and she out of the light are gone,
He sees himself and cannot bear the sight.
All down, all dead, look how the bright sun turns
On me and feel, it warms and ah, it burns.

BOB INGHAM

THE WORLD'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS REGIMENT

Is the Duke of Glastonbury's Own Light Elephant Cavalry, also known as 'The Tuskers'. Founded in northern India around the turn of the century, the regiment rode their elephants into battle to subdue unruly border tribes. When the tribesmen later equipped themselves with ex-army surplus Panzer tanks, the Tuskers, disgusted with this poor sportsmanship, brought their elephants back to the Somerset HQ where they are used only for the occasional game of polo. Qualifications for entry are very strict; officers must not only be graduates of Sandhurst, but must also be rich enough to have their uniforms tailored by Crocker & Devenish of New Burlington Street. The regimental mascot used to be a Bengal Tiger called Khan, but he had to be retired to the local zoo after eating two of the subalterns. Dinner in the officers' mess is a glittering occasion and there are the usual traditional drinking rites after the meal. Unlike lesser regiments, however, the Tuskers do not pass round the port after dinner. Instead, two vast and ancient pewter tankards are circulated in opposite directions. Depending on the speed at which they are passed, it is possible to receive both tankards at once, although it is regarded as a breach of etiquette to drain both of them. The tankards always contain Merrydown Vintage Cider, which uses fine English apples like Bramleys and Cox's in its fermentation, rather than the bitter little cider apples used in those brands reserved strictly for the ranks. The elephants are only permitted to drink Merrydown on the Colonel's birthday.

Merrydown. Cider for the few.

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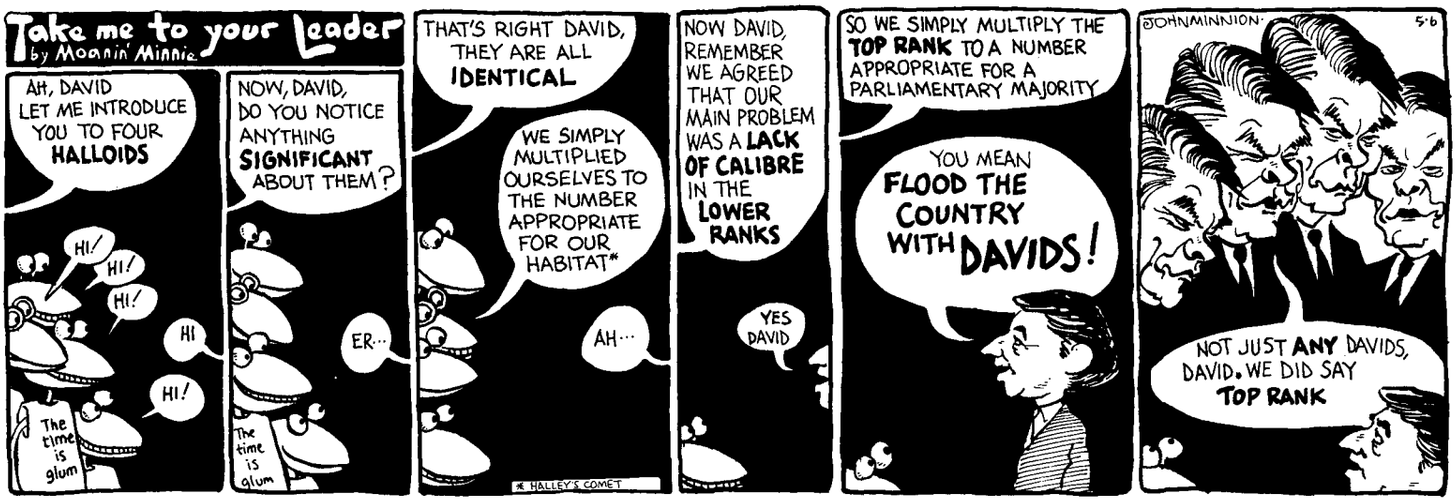
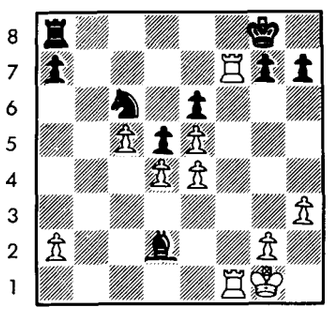

Take me to your Leader
by Moanin' Minnie
AH, DAVID LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO FOUR HALLOIDS
HI! HI! HI! HI! HI!
The time is glum
NOW, DAVID, DO YOU NOTICE ANYTHING SIGNIFICANT ABOUT THEM?
ER...
The time is glum
THAT'S RIGHT DAVID, THEY ARE ALL IDENTICAL
WE SIMPLY MULTIPLIED OURSELVES TO THE NUMBER APPROPRIATE FOR OUR HABITAT*
AH...
* HALLEY'S COMET
NOW DAVID, REMEMBER WE AGREED THAT OUR MAIN PROBLEM WAS A LACK OF CALIBRE IN THE LOWER RANKS
YES DAVID
SO WE SIMPLY MULTIPLY THE TOP RANK TO A NUMBER APPROPRIATE FOR A PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY
YOU MEAN FLOOD THE COUNTRY WITH DAVIDS!
JOHNMINNION 5·6
NOT JUST ANY DAVIDS, DAVID. WE DID SAY TOP RANK

Chess



DO YOU remember this position? It comes from the 19th game of the 1972 Fischer-Spassky match, a game that was widely admired for the knife-edge equilibrium between Spassky's imaginative attacking and Fischer's cool and resourceful defence. The action developed like this from an Alekhine's Defence: **1. e4 Nf6 2. e5 Nd5 3. d4 d6 4. Nf3 Bg4 5. Be2 e6 6. 0-0 Be7 7. h3 Bh5 8. c4 Nb6 9. Nc3 0-0 10. Be3 d5 11. c5 Bxf3 12. Bxf3 Nc4 13. b3 Nxe3 14. fxe3 b6 15. e4 c6 16. b4 bxc5 17. bxc5 Qa5 18. Nxd5!? Bg5! 19. Bh5! cxd5 20. Bxf7+ Rxf7 21. Rxf7 Qd2 Bxd2 23. Raf1 Nc6.** Commentators found little to fault here, despite deep investigations of the complicated tactics involved. But since then players with White have chosen a different path, deviating with **12. gxf3!?** or **13. Bf4**. And indeed it was not so clear that White should be happy about reaching the diagram position. For Spassky (*White*) found his valiant efforts rewarded with nothing better than a draw after: **24. exd5 exd5 25. Rd7 Be3+ 26. Kh1 Bxd4 27. e6 Be5! 28. Rxd5 Re8 29. Rfe1 Rxe6 30. Rd6! Kf7 31. Rxc6 Rxc6 32. Rxe5 Kf6 33. Rd5 Ke6 34. Rh5 h6 35. Kh2 Ra6** and the Rook ending is just equal.

One of the pleasures of postal chess is that it offers a chance to re-enact the encounters of heroes of the board — and perhaps just once in a while to play better than Spassky and triumph over a surrogate Fischer who has borrowed the great man's moves. This was what happened in a 1986 Dutch correspondence game **van der Gracht-Prins** (from the diagram, instead of Spassky's 24. exd5): **24. Rc7!** Although the Rook move had been suggested before, its power had not been properly appreciated. **Nxd4** This does look the natural reply, but White's doubled Rooks on the 7th rank are a decisive force. There are two other moves: a) 24 . . . dxe4 25. Rxc6 e3 26. Rf4 e2 27. Re4 e1=Q+ 28. Rxe1 Bxe1 29. Rxe6 (analysis by Timman) and with 3 connected passed pawns for the piece the chances are all on White's side; b) 24 . . . Nd8 seems the toughest. White has a draw in reserve with 25. Re7 Nc6 26. Rc7 etc. The ambitious try is 25. exd5 exd5 26. Rd7, when, in comparison with the Spassky-Fischer continuation, Black must surely be worse off with his Knight on d8. **25. Rff7 Be3+ 26. Kh1 Bh6 27. g4! Rf8** Against 27 . . . dxe4 van der Gracht, in *Informator 42*, gives the variation 28. g5 e3 29. Kg2! e2 30. Kf2 Bxg5 31. Rxg7+ Kf8 32. Rxh7 Kg8 33. Rcg7+ Kf8 34. Rxg5 e1=Q+ 35. Kxe1 Nf3+ 36. Kf2 Nxg5 37. Rh8+ wins. **28. Rfd7 Nf3 29. exd5 exd5** White also wins after 29 . . . Nxe5 30. dxe6 Nxd7 31. exd7. **30. e6 Re8 31. Rxa7 d4 32. c6 1-0.** What would you have done against that, Fischer?

Of course, postal play also has its disadvantages. There can be none of those whispered exchanges among spectators, which are an enjoyable part of the game, particularly when the truth of the matter confutes all opinions.

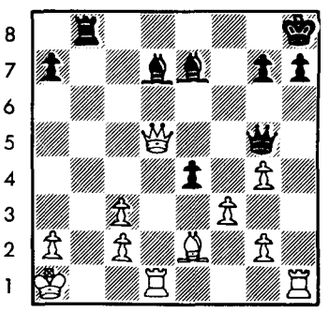
For example, consider the position below, which I saw on the board next to mine last week in our local club tournament in Aberystwyth. Black (to move), a professor of economics, has invested the exchange against White, a computer scientist, and now has a problematic decision to make:

(a) Black actually chose **1 . . . Ba3**, with the intention of forcing a draw by perpetual check.

(b) Two interested spectators thought that White must have blundered and that **1 . . . Bf6** would win for Black. However, White had seen something which he judged to be a refutation of this.

(c) After the game someone else suggested **1 . . . Qe3.**

What would your choice be, and how should the game continue?



Solution to last week's position [1n1k4/p7/8/1P1N4/r7/P7/8/3K3R]: in this study by **Marwitz & Selman** White wins by **1. Rh8+ Kd7 2. Kc2 Rc4+ 3. Kb3 Rc8 4. Nf6+ Kc7 5. b6+! axb6 6. Nd5+ Kb7 7. Rh7+ Ka6 8. Nb4+ Kb5 9. Rh5+ Rc5 10. Rh8 Na6 11. a4+ Ka5 12. Ra8** and **13. Rxa6 mate.**

George Botterill

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This England

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please.)

☐ North Yorkshire farmer Ernie Mason will shortly receive his annual bonus from British Rail. Mr Mason farms land through which runs a single track railway line carrying quarried stone from Redmire to Leyburn three times a week. The line crosses the road to Mr Mason's farm with a level crossing operated from a local house. Because the house, under an ancient Act of Light, overlooks his farmland, British Rail award him an annual payment of 13p. There is a small snag. British Rail demand a receipt for the payment and it costs Mr Mason 13p in postage. — *Yorkshire Evening Post* (L.T. Annal)

☐ The efficient communications system enjoyed by the police has in a recent case enabled a Caterpillar tractor stolen from a site on the M25 to be recovered (by means of an informant's tip-off) outside Cairo. — *Guardian* (Georgina Smith)

☐ The agreement made with Equity was a great advance in labour relations, he felt; for the cost of four jockstraps a year at about £15 each was a drain on the dancer's income. 'You wouldn't send a miner down the pit without a hard hat, would you?' he enquired. — *The Scotsman* (R. Margaret Macdonald)

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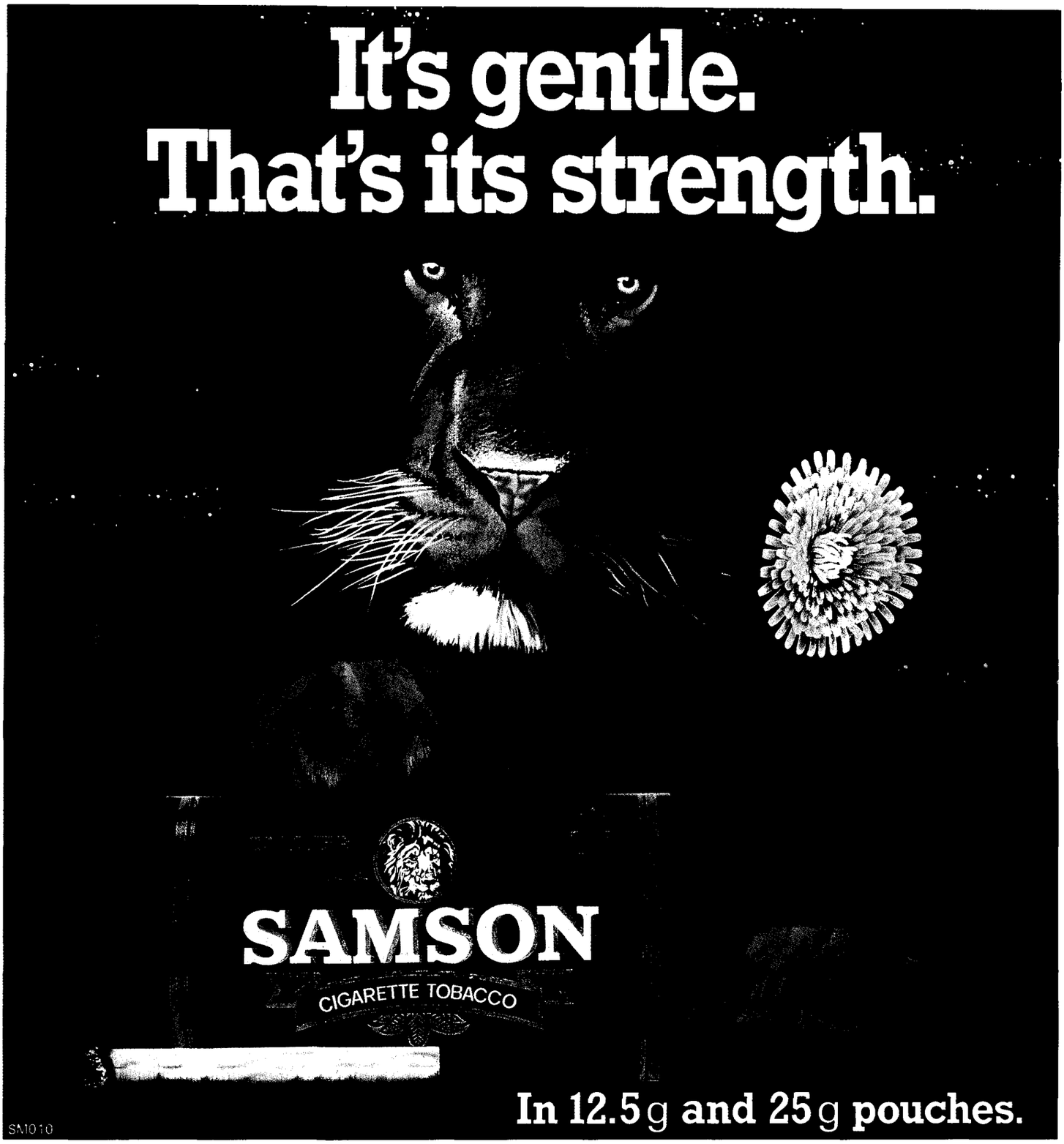

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Health Departments' Chief Medical Officers

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